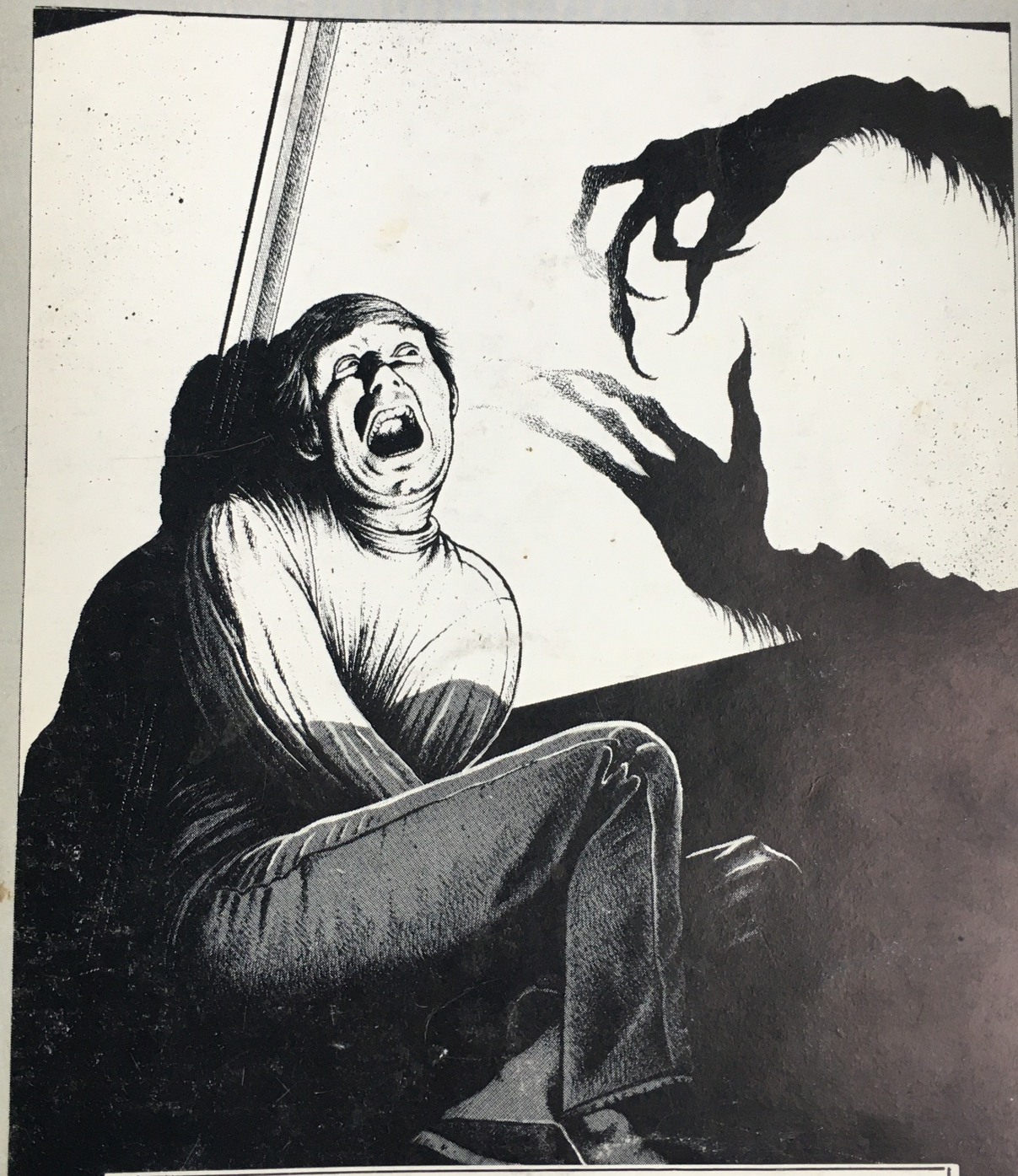
No. 15

FOR READERS OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS
AND PLAYERS OF *'CALL OF CTHULHU'*

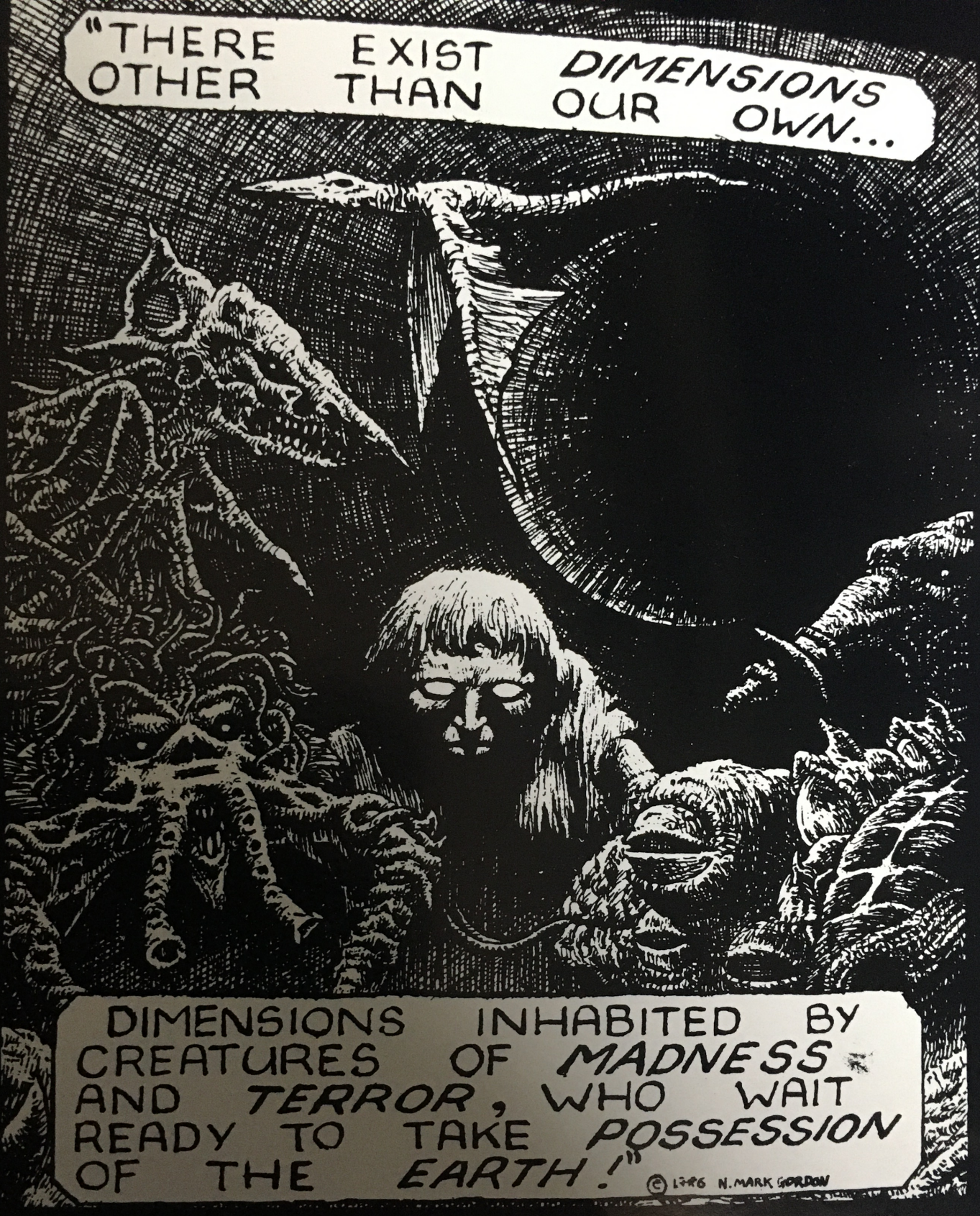
85p

DAGON



RETURN TO ARKHAM

by Brian Lumley


"THERE EXIST OTHER THAN DIMENSIONS OUR OWN...
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IN THE VAULT

It is surprising to note that with the appearance of this issue Dagon *has been going for some three years. It is interesting to note how it has progressed from being solely a vehicle for publishing scenarios set in the* Call of Cthulhu *vein to the journal you hold in front of your claws now.*

My thanks go to all the loathsome ghouls who have continued to read this zine, supply Dagon *with articles, fiction, illustrations and letters throughout the years. Without you* Dagon *would have folded aeons ago.*

In case you didn't know Dagon *has just picked up the GAMESDAY AWARD FOR BEST FANZINE for the second year running. My thanks go to all those who voted.*

Unfortunately I missed Gamesday this year as I was in Birmingham attending Fantasycon XI, where I had the pleasure to meet several Mythos personalities. The result of one such encounter is featured in this issue, where Ramsey Campbell gives us his opinions on censorship, the occult, fiction and, of course, the Cthulhu Mythos.

Also within the confines of this issue is the first publication of Brian Lumley's "Return to Arkham" specially adapted for this zine and illustrated by exciting newcomer, Martin McKenna.

Bob Price supplies us with his first piece of Mythos research in over a year, I hope it clears up any problems readers may have encountered with their pronounciation of Mythos names.

I regret having been forced to up the cover price to 85p this issue. The last edition was printed terribly, leaving me to have the necessary ammendments done elsewhere, which worked out expensive and very time consuming on my part. I am loathe to let the same printer tackle Dagon *again.*

Lithographic metal plate printing works out pretty expensive, but remains the only option which can give the contributions the quality of reproduction they deserve. I hope readers don't mind paying the extra 10p.

Also appearing for the first time are a number of adverts which have also helped to offset the cover price increase a little. To be fair to readers I have added a few extra pages this issue, so even if you don't find the adverts useful, you aren't missing your dosage of Dagon...

HAVE A VERY BLACK *Christ* MASS - *C. T. Ford.*

THE BURROWERS ARE COMING

(Watch this space...)

Crawling at you

Due out at the time this issue goes to print is *Crypt of Cthulhu #43* which carries a sub-heading entitled "The Tomb-Herd and Others". Ramsey Campbell fans will have no trouble in recognising the title and as you might have guessed this issue concentrates on Ramsey's Mythos fiction. Amongst the rarities are "The Face in the Desert", "The Tower on Yuggoth", "A Madness from the Vaults", "The Return of the Witch" and "The Tomb-Herd". If you enjoyed last issue's "The Plain of Sound" which is also in this new collection, then this issue should not be missed. Order from *Robert M. Price, 107 East James Street, Mount Olive, North Carolina 28365, USA.* Price $4.50.

Save your Christmas money for Ramsey's *The Hungry Moon* due out in January from Hutchinson Books. The book tells the tale of an evangalist who becomes the slave of something evil spawned aeons ago. The book isn't really a monster novel and to get a better idea what was running through the authors mind, I'd read the interview elsewhere in this issue.

For readers who haven't seen the advert yet, I am pleased to announce the formation of *Dagon Press*, which will be stocking all future Necronomicon Press publications. Forthcoming monstrosities include; *Lovecraft Studies #13* should be out now and available from the *Dagon Press* address at £3.50. *The Chronology Out of Time: Dates in the fiction of H. P. Lovecraft* by Peter Cannon, *First Writings in the Pawtuxet Valley Gleaner, 1906*, HPL's first published writings, when he was a boy of 16. *Studies in Weird Fiction* a sister publication to *Lovecraft Studies* edited by S. T. Joshi #1 includes works on Clark Ashton Smith, Lord Dunsany, T.E.D. Klein, Henry James and William Hope Hodgson. *Necronomicon Press: The First Ten*, a brief history of Necronomicon Press's first ten years of publishing, including articles by Marc A. Michaud and S. T. Joshi with a complete index to all the press's publications. If any readers want to reserve copies, get in touch and include an S.A.E.

Forthcoming from Soft Books, the Canadian Lovecraftian specialists are *Howard Phillips Lovecraft: The Books 4*, a bibliography of all Lovecraft's books 1915-1986 which is available in a limited edition of 100 copies. Whispers say they are O.P. already... *William Hope Hodgson: A Bibliography 1903-1986* 200 ltd edition copies. *Les Bibliotheques 10*, HPL chronology 1950-65. 150 copies. And *Clark Ashton Smith*, number 2 in the "Old Masters" series of booklets again limited to 200 copies. I hope to also stock these as part of the new press, again readers are advised to get in touch with an S.A.E.

Tales After Dark #2 is available about now from *Garrie Hall, 93 Beaumont Road, Loughborough, Leics LE11 2JA*, for £2 plus 24p postage. Fiction includes "A Darker Shade of White", by Carl T. Ford, "The Secret of the Stanley House" by John A. Crow, "Padgett Weggs" by D. F. Lewis, reprints of "The Last Supper" by Donald R. Burleson and "Blood Atonement" by Robert M. Price and "Bearing With the Strain" by Roger Johnson. Poetry by Robert Longmuir and Roger Johnson alongside artwork by Steve Hatherley, Stella Hender, Bill Jones, Stephen Skwarek and Allen Koszowski round off the issue.

Die Rubezahl also on its second issue includes articles on the editor's view of the horror field today. Fiction; "My life, my burden" supposedly modelled on the style of Clark Ashton Smith and Le Fanu's "Carmilla", a few role-playing related essays and a lively lettercol. Worth reading if you follow the gaming hobby, purely to read some of Peter's hilarious in-jokes. Intelligent at times, frustrating in places. Definitely worth buying if you don't take your reading matter too seriously. The regular artist, Martin McKenna supplies some stirring illustrations, a pity they haven't reproduced that well. £1 plus 28p postage from *Pete Blanchard, 4 Holly Acre, Prey Heath, Mayford, Woking, Surrey GU22 0SL.*

Clive Barker's (there's no word to describe it) *The Damnation Game* should be out from Sphere paperbacks now. It went OP in hardback very quickly, I've seen copies going for £25 already, hang on to it if you have one, it'll be worth a lot in time to come. This novel is simply the best horror tale to come along in the last five years, praised as the new Stephen King by reviewers high and low, this novel should not be missed by any man who calls himself a horror fan!

Mythos Names and How to Say Them

by Robert M. Price

Many entities and items of the Cthulhu Mythos are tagged with epithets like "not-to-be-named," "the unspeakable," "the unnameable," "unaussprechlichen," and many readers will agree that these adjectives are deserved in more ways than one: just try pronouncing some of the Mythos names! This article will try to help the tongue-tied Cthulhuvian acolyte to speak the unspeakable better.

To begin with the name without which one cannot discuss the Cthulhu Mythos, how does one pronounce "Cthulhu"? Lovecraft once playfully told correspondent Willis Conover, "All the pronounciation of the Outside word roughly given as *Cthulhu* in our alphabet — authorities seem to differ" (*Selected Letters* V, p. 302). In fact, Lovecraft himself may not have used one pronounciation consistently. And no wonder: HPL goes on to explain that "the word is supposed to represent a fumbling human attempt to catch the phonetics of an *absolutely non-human* word ... The syllables were determined by a physiological equipment wholly unlike ours, *hence could never be uttered perfectly by human throats* ..." (ibid., pp. 10-11). Lovecraft's own letters give an attempted pronounciation. He wrote to Duane W. Rimel:

> The actual sound — as nearly as human organs could imitate it or human letters record it — may be taken as something like Khlul-hloo, with the first syllable pronounced gutterally and very thickly. The *u* is about like that in *full*; and the first syllable is not unlike *klul* in sound, since the *h* represents the gutteral thickness. The second syllable is not very well rendered — the *l* being unrepresented (ibid.).

Two years later, Lovecraft recommended pretty much the same to Willis Conover: "The best approximation one can make is to grunt, bark, or cough the imperfectly-formed syllables *Cluh-Lhu* with the tip of the tongue firmly affixed to the roof of the mouth" (*Selected Letters* V, p. 302). This way of saying it is reinforced in two of Lovecraft's revision tales, where the narrator, not otherwise versed in Cthulhuvian lore, must spell out the name as he heard others say it. In "Medusa's Coil," an old African woman is heard to invoke "Clooloo," while in "Winged Death," Africans are said to refer in whispers to "Clulu."

The matter might seem to be settled neatly, but for the fact that various memoirs written about Lovecraft after his death by people who knew him depict him pronouncing "Cthulhu" in a variety of ways. For example, HPL's close friend and literary executor Robert Barlow recalled that "Lovecraft pronounced Cthulhu as Koot-u-lew." [1] While even an eyewitness report must yield in authority to first-person sources like the letters just quoted, Barlow's recollection does receive support from Lovecraft's tale "The Mound," where the underground dwellers in K'n-yan worship the primeval octopus-headed god "Tulu." One wonders if this pronounciation of the name were not influenced by "Koot-humi," the name of the most important of the Tibetan "Masters" of the Theosophical cult, with which HPL was somewhat familiar. (In fact, these Masters served as the prototype for the "undying leaders of the [Cthulhu] cult in the mountains of China" in "The Call of Cthulhu."[2])

Another close friend of Lovecraft, W. Paul Cook, whose encouragement was instrumental in getting Lovecraft to start (and later to continue) his fiction writing, recalled that "Lovecraft denied any derivative or phonetic source or system for the combination of letters making up that word ["Cthulhu"] and others. The reader must pronounce to suit himself. In that especial case, however, he suggested 'Tulu,' both 'u's long. Some of them are less easy."[3]

Still another clue, possibly pointing in another direction, comes from Julius Schwartz, a one-time Lovecraft editor. Nelson Bridwell writes "In the August 1947 *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* there is a one-page feature on Lovecraft which describes Cthulhu as 'a word which only he could properly whistle.' I once asked Julie Schwartz about this, and he confirmed having heard HPL do just that — and said my own whistling was quite close to his."[4] Cf Lovecraft's words to Rimel: "The kind of ... noise made in this way is *not really like speaking*, but is more like the sound a man makes when he tries to imitate a steam-whistle ..." (*Selected Letters* V, p. 11). Well, then, how to say "Cthulhu"? Perhaps

here, too, "The reader must pronounce to suit himself."

All such problems vanish away when we consider the name "Dagon" which appears in the story of that title and later in "The Shadow over Innsmouth." Here we are dealing with the ancient Philistine fertility god, sometimes pictured as a merman. Lovecraft himself makes this explicit; he writes of the terrible truth behind "the Philistine legend of Dagon, the Fish-God." So how was this name (which probably came from a Semitic word for "rain" or "cloud") pronounced? Day-gon.[5]

To add a bit of complication, let me mention a theory of mine: I think that what we actually have here is another designation for Cthulhu! There are hints aplenty in "The Shadow over Innsmouth," where for example, Zadok Allen no sooner mentions "Father Dagon" than he bursts forth in cries of "Cthulhu fhtagn! Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah-nagl fhtagn." This is, of course, the cultic confession of Cthulhu we hear first in "The Call of Cthulhu." It means "In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming." Also, it is said of the Innsmouth Deep Ones that "they would rise again for the tribute Great Cthulhu craved." Cthulhu, then, would seem to be a real object of worship of the "Order of Dagon," "Dagon" is simply a familiar and appropriate name from the Old Testament chosen to mask the secret worship of unknown Cthulhu. Remember, outsiders could take a regularly scheduled bus into Innsmouth, and they must not know what is really happening there; remember, too, how secretive Cthulhu cultists are in "The Call of Cthulhu." We see the same kind of thing in "The Dreams in the Witch House" where what first seems to be more familiar Satan-worship turns out to be the cult of Azathoth and Nyarlathotep. Finally, let us note that the gigantic ichthyic form glimpsed in "Dagon" is identified with that name, and since that story is the prototype for the section of "The Call of Cthulhu" subtitled "The Madness from the Sea,"[6] the fishy titan is Cthulhu's own prototype. So, "Dagon" is an alias for Cthulhu.

From a name directly borrowed from the Bible let us turn to Lovecraftian names merely influenced by the Bible. HPL explained that he coined some of his names so as "to suggest — either closely or remotely — certain names in actual history or folklore which have weird or sinister associations connected with them. Thus 'Yuggoth' has a sort of Arabic or Herbraic cast, to suggest certain words passed down from antiquity in the magical formulae contained in Moorish and Jewish manuscripts." (*Selected Letters* IV, p. 386). "Yuggoth" should probably be pronounced as most people do in fact say it, with a short "u" and with the first syllable accented. Lin Carter suggests that one "g" be pronounced at the end of the first syllable, the other at the start of the second syllable (and so in other names or words like "Shaggai" and "shoggoth" whose Semitic basis is obvious), but Hebrew pronounciation would not necessarily demand this, since the prophet's name "Haggai" (the apparent inspiration for "Shaggai") is spelled phonetically in various Bible dictionaries either as Carter suggests *or* with only one "g" attached to the first syllable. (Similarly "Haggadah," "Haggith," etc.)

As for "Shaggai," one gets the feeling that HPL intended it to rhyme with Haggai as pronounced "Hag-i" with the first syllable accented and a long "i" in the second. But Haggai can also be pronounced, as one often hears, "Hag-i-i" (short "i," then long "i") or "Hag-ay-i," again ending with a long "i." Presumably Shaggai could rhyme with either of these three syllable versions, and HPL may have intended this.

By the way, in the letter just quoted, Lovecraft also says he wanted "Nug and Yeb" (the "evil twins" — *Selected Letters* V, p. 30) to "suggest the dark and mysterious tone of Tartar or Thibetan folklore" (*Selected Letters* IV, p. 386). This would seem to me to militate against Will Murray's interesting hypothesis that the two names are derived from the Egyptian pair of gods Nut and Geb.[7] Also cf. the Egyptian "rock tombs of Neb" (Egyptian for "Lord") in "The Outsider." Can Lovecraft have taken this word and the name of Dunsany's prophet Yug and interchanged initial letters to arrive at Nug and Yeb? This would give us an Egyptian connection of sorts, but not with the gods Nut and Geb.

Some names Lovecraft built up from an imagined unearthly root, then giving them a secondary Arabic ring "to account for the transmitting influence of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred. Typical *Necronomicon* names are *Azathoth*, *Yog-Sothoth*, *Shub-Niggurath*, etc." (*Selected Letters* IV, p. 387). The first of these names could possibly be derived from a book on alchemy current in Lovecraft's day, *Azoth, or The Star in The East*, though there is no evidence Lovecraft had seen it. The guess of Simon in his preface to his bogus *Necronomicon*[8] that the name is half Sumerian (*Azag* = "chief") and half Egyptian (Thoth = god of magic, and so, derivatively, "enchanter") is nonsense. Doubtless Lovecraft had no

etymology in mind. Nonetheless, the clue that the name is supposed to have a Semitic ring allows us to pronounce it on analogy with the biblical Anathoth, the hometown of the prophet Jeremiah. Both "a's" are short, the first syllable is accented, and both "th's" are fully pronounced (i.e., neither becomes a syllable "t").

In the case of "the frightful name of Yog-Sothoth," Lovecraft gives us some help in a letter to Clark Ashton Smith. He relates how "There are curious speculations in the posthumous papers of the late Randolph Carter, regarding the etymological relationship betwixt the *Sath* of *Sath-og-gwah* [Smith's Tsathoggua], & the *Soth* of that hideous & indescribable *Yog-Soth-oth* which Alhazred mentions with such manifest reluctance in the *Necronomicon*" (*Selected Letters* III, p. 242). This tells us that the name is *not* supposed to be pronounced "Yog-So-thoth," with a long "o" in "So," as in the film *The Haunted Palace*, when Dr. Willett says "Yog-*so*-thoth." Rather it should be more like the way Wilbur Whateley says it in the film *The Dunwich Horror*, with both "o's" short. This is evident because of the greater similarity to "Sath" when pronounced this way, and because, since the first "th" is part of the same syllable as "so-," the Semitic pronounciation intended by Alhazred must have been a short "o," as in "Anathoth," "Ashtaroth," etc.

Shub-Niggurath, Lovecraft's fertility goddess, a "cloud-like entity" (*Selected Letters* V, p. 303) which is represented by a black goat, poses some difficulty. Certain features of the name are indeed Semitic, e.g., the double "g" and the ending "-ath," reminiscent of Gath, the hometown of Goliath. But the substance of the name seems to have been borrowed (whether consciously or not) from Lord Dunsany's "Sheal-Nugannoth." The fact that Lovecraft divides the syllables 1/3 instead of 2/2 as in Dunsany's version implies that he accented both "Shub" and "gur." It is hard to resist the conclusion that the syllable "nig," added to the Dunsanian original, is supposed to recall the Latin *niger*, "black," as in "Black Goat of the Woods."

Another name with Dunsanian roots is "Nyarlathotep." Will Murray has pointed out, there is a very obvious kinship between this name and those of Dunsany's prophet "Alhireth-Hotep" and god "Mynarthitep." The fact that the name came to Lovecraft first in a dream hardly means that it came from a vacuum; just the opposite: his fervent reading of Dunsany must have filled his subconscious mind with Dunsanian influence. here the pronounciation hinges on whether, in order to preserve the Egyptian suffix "-hotep," we ought to snip the "h" from the preceding syllable, so pronouncing the name "Ny-ar-lat-ho-tep." Since Lovecraft explicitly connects Nyarlathotep with ancient Egypt in the *Fungi from Yuggoth* sonnet "Narlathotep" (XXI) this would not be implausible.

But this factor seems to be overruled by the clear analogy with Alhireth-hotep, which has a separate "h," and thus the dipthong "th" before the suffix "-hotep," and with Mynarthitep, which is more naturally pronounced "My-nar-thi-tep" or "My-narth-i-tep" and only suggests the "-hotep" suffix (also cf. the frequent Dunsanian name-syllables ending in the "th"). In fact, Nyarlathotep is basically just a reshuffling of the letters of Mynarthitep. So the name should probably be pronounced "Ny-ar-lath-o-tep." Where should the accent go? This is hard to say, since Lovecraft only *saw* the name written in his dream (*Selected Letters* I, pp. 160-162). But he must have had something in mind when he used it. Unfortunately the accenting of the sonnet "Nyarlathotep" does not help us because the name is only the title and does not occur in the poem itself! But Steven Mariconda has pointed out, Lovecraft seems to have often written his prose with a sensitivity to how it would sound read aloud (which he sometimes did for friends).[9]

What pronounciation would have used all the syllables of Nyarlathotep to best advantage? I think it most effective to accent the last syllable, but this is admittedly subjective. It should be noted, however, that David McCallum has recorded two Lovecraft stories which mention Nyarlathotep, and in "The Haunter of the Dark," he says "Ny-yar-la-*tho*-tep" with a short "o," while in "The Rats in the Walls" he says the name "Ny-yar-*lath*-o-tep."

We have already mentioned Clark Ashton Smith's furry bat-like-toad-god Tsathoggua. HPL became an ardent devotee of this diety, enthusiastically adopting him into the pantheon of the Old Ones, even making him older than Cthulhu ("Thou Who wast ancient beyond Memory/Ere the Stars Spawned Great Cthulhu!" [*Selected Letters* III, p. 185]).[10] Some have been misled by HPL's reference to a creature called "Ossadogowah" or "Son of Sadogowah" (=of Tsathoggua) (See his fragment "Of Evill Sorceries Done in New England

of Daemons in No Humane Shape," incorporated in August Derleth's *The Lurker at the Threshold*)[11] into pronouncing Tsathoggua "Tsath-o-goo-a." We know HPL, presumably following Smith, pronounced the name "Tsath-o-gwa"; he makes this clear in a letter to Smith where he sounds out the name "Tsathoggua, or *Sath-og-gwa*." In the same letter he gives the variant "g'wah" for the last syllable. The "-gowah" in "Sadogowah" must simply represent a Wampanaug Indian dialect expansion of the syllable "gwah" where Lovecraft himself placed an apostrophe in the variant mentioned above ("g'wah"). Smith, too, had used dialect variants of the name such as the medieval French "Sodagui" (*Selected Letters* IV, p. 388). As for the accent, it would seem most natural to stress the middle syllable.

August Derleth's "Ithaqua" is obviously derivative of Smith's Tsathoggua and so should be pronounced as rhyming with it. Derleth's "Lloigor" (Is the Welch ring, as Colin Wilson notices in "The Return of the Lloigor" supposed to recall Machen? If so, what is Lloigor doing in Asia?) and Zhar are self-pronouncing, while it is a matter of indifference whether one pronounces "Cthugha" as rhyming with an old-time automobile horn ("aw-*oog*-a!") or as based on "thug" or "ugh!," any of these being appropriate in spirit as well as letter.

Frank Belknap Long's Hounds of Tindalos invite equally the pronounciation "*Tin*-dalos" or "Tin-*dal*-os." Long coined the name purely for the effect of fierceness; it has no Greek root, despite the sound. It seems to me that I once heard Long pronounce it with the accent on the first syllable, but later I asked him what he intended, and he said that he couldn't remember after all these years.

The name "Chaugnar Faugn" presents one obvious problem: is the "g" in "Faugn" silent? Probably not. "Fawn" seems highly inappropriate for a horrific entity, whether one thinks of Bambi or of the fawns of Classical myth. Also, since "Chaugnar Faugn" seems to have been coined under the influence of "Cthulhu fhtagn," one may suspect that the "g" is to be pronounced in a Lovecraftian way, i.e., the "g" indicating a thick gutteral accent, not quite a hard "g," but not completely silent either. But one may shortcircuit the whole problem by simply calling this being "Chaugnar" as Long himself does in the poem "When Chaugnar Wakes."

The ranks of the Old Ones are ever-expanding, but let me choose only one more before going onto something else. Lin Carter pronounces "Zoth-Ommog" with all short "o's" and with the accent on the second "o": Zoth-*om*-mog." He ought to know, since he spawned this one.

Only a brief word need be said concerning Mythos book titles, as the only difficulty in most cases is that readers may not know the various languages. The French *Cultes des Goules* should be said (more or less) "Kult day Gool." *De Vermis Mysteriis* should be pronounced "Day Vairmis Mis-ter-*ee*-is." *Unaussprechlichen Kulten* (actually, it has to have the definite article "Die" in front of it, or it would be Unaussprechliche Kulten), should be "oon-ows-*shprek*-lik-in *Kool*-tin," making allowances for back-of-the-tongue German "r's" and hard "ch's." *Necronomicon* is simple enough. All three "o's" represent Greek omicrons and so should be short; only the unitiated will say "Necr-oh-nomicon" or worse yet "Necro-nome-icon." A long "o" would represent the omega, and there are none in this word. (Lovecraft himself uses the Greek spelling in *Selected Letters* III, p.166). In *The Book of Eibon*, "Ei-" is pronounced like a long "i," not a long "e." This is clear from the medieval Latin version of the title *Liber Ivonis* (eye-*von*-is).[12] Finally, Ramsey Campbell's *Revelations of Glaaki* should not be said "Glake-eye," but rather "*Glohk*-ee." In "The Inhabitant of the Lake," someone hears it said, and it sounds like "Glarky, or something like that." (American readers should bear in mind the English accent of the speaker here.)

In conclusion, let us consider a few place names. Though the names "Dunwich" and "Innsmouth" do not seem particularly unearthly, they are not hard to mispronounce. "Dunwich" should most likely be pronounced "Dunnich" like the old English town of that name, and on analogy with "Greenwich" ("Grinnich"), Norwich, etc. "Innsmouth," being a New England town, should be "Inns-muth" like Portsmouth, *not* "Inns-mouth" as in "big mouth" or "Inns-mooth" like "Vermouth." "R'lyeh" (which, interestingly, Lovecraft originally intended to spell simply "L'yeh") is supposed to be pronounced as one long syllable (not like the word "rely") with the accent at the end.[13]

Perhaps at this point the reader expects me to reveal that HPL's "Klarkashton" and Bloch's "Luveh-Keraph" are actually the correct phonteic renderings of the names "Clark

Ashton Smith" and "Lovecraft," but I will quit before I have completely shattered my credibility. But after our survey of Mythos names and how to say them, at least one thing has become clear: "Truly," as H. P. Lovecraft said, "the problems of the scholarly cosmic initiate are multiple, varied, & complex!" (*Selected Letters* III, p.242).

NOTES

1 "The Barlow Journal" in August W. Derleth, *Some Notes on H. P. Lovecraft* (West Warwick: Necronomicon Press, 1982), p. xxviii.

2 See my "HPL and HPB: Lovecraft's Use of Theosophy," *Crypt of Cthulhu*, #5, p. 6.

3 "An Appreciation of H. P. Lovecraft" in *Beyond the Wall of Sleep* (Sauk City: Arkham House, 1943), p.456.

4 *Crypt of Cthulhu* #32, p. 48.

5 On this point the reader may check any Bible dictionary.

6 See my "'Dagon' and 'The Madness from the Sea,'" *Crypt of Cthulhu* #9, pp. 11-12.

7 Will Murray, "The Natures of Nug and Yeb," *Lovecraft Studies* #9, pp. 52-59.

8 Simon, *Necronomicon* (New York: Avon Books, 1980), p. xix.

9 Steven Mariconda, "H. P. Lovecraft, Prose Stylist," *Crypt of Cthulhu* #12, pp. 5-12.

10 Clark Ashton Smith, *Planets and Dimensions* (Baltimore: Mirage Press, 1973), p. 36.

11 For the original text of Lovecraft's fragment see *Crypt of Cthulhu* #6, pp. 25-27.

12 Thanks to S. T. Joshi for confirmation of this.

13 Lovecraft contemplates calling the "corpse-city" simply "L'yeh" in an unpublished letter to Mrs. F. C. Clark written November 14-19, 1925, before he wrote "The Call of Cthulhu." I owe this information to S. T. Joshi.
As to the terminal stress on "R'lyeh," I confess I cannot at present recall where I read this.

THE RED BRAIN'S TRUST

Continued from page 40

Derleth did not realise the marked difference between his Mythos and Lovecraft's until most of his Mythos work was complete. Whether this difference was brought to his attention by the articles on the subject such as Richard Tierney's *The Derleth Mythos* (in Meade & Penny Frierson's *HPL*) or by his editing the more philosophical portions of the *Selected Letters*, cannot be said with certainty - though I suspect the latter. My own feeling is that Derleth admired Lovecraft and deeply regreted not having taken a more active part in shaping the Mythos in Lovecraft's lifetime. Still more, perhaps, did he regret having missed the opportunity to collaborate with Lovecraft on a story, as so many others had done, in spite of Lovecraft's frequent protestations of disliking collaboration on fiction. His Mythos stories and the posthumous collaborations may be seen as filling a need to make good what Derleth could have regarded as the great missed opportunity of his youth. In view of how much lovers of scary stories owe to August Derleth in his editing capacity, it would be churlish indeed to resent his having this satisfaction.

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IX 86

RAMSEY CAMPBELL

Transcendent of Terror

Interviewed by Carl T. Ford

Ramsey Campbell is Britain's most respected author of the macabre. Beginning his writing career with the Lovecraftian Cthulhu Mythos pastiche and successfully divorcing himself within a very short time to form his own unique style of horror fiction.

Campbell's tales are hard hitting, due to the author's close attention to detail and a very strong sense of knowing what can and can't scare his readers. His prose is infested with the surreal world of nightmare, sometimes spawned from the authors own bizarre background. The dark imagery and Ramsey's uncompromising view of modern day life in Britain leaves a nasty aftertaste as do many of the stories themselves. From the subtle unease of "Mackintosh Willy" which tied for the World Fantasy Award in 1980, to the stark terror of The Doll Who Ate His Mother, *the author's first novel. Campbell appears to have made the transition from successful story writing to novel without any of the troubles which usually hinder writers. I could go on listing Campbell's achievements, his award winning tales, background and novels, but the list would never be complete. I will briefly mention that the current issue of* Crypt of Cthulhu *is devoted to Ramsey's Mythos fiction and that a biography of the author's work is in the writing by Leigh Blackmore for publication by Dark Press sometime in 1987. Catch them before they, too, become Cold Print...*

The following interview took place at Fantasycon XI, on September 27th, 1986, where I found Ramsey in the shadows of his hotel room amongst a pile of Mario Bava video movies.

Dagon: Your first collection of short tales, *The Inhabitant of the Lake*, dealing with Mythos themes, was published when you were still in your teens. From the many varied horrors and monsters you obviously have been attracted to the darker aspects of entertainment from an early age. What were your earliest memories of being scared?

Campbell: Well, the very earliest was reading a George MacDonald story called *The Princess and the Goblin* which was written as a kids fairy tale, which is still in print, though, oddly enough, some of the library editions have cut out the scene which gave me nightmares for a good while after my first reading it. There's a scene in which the animals that have been down in the goblin mines for several generations all come straying up into the gardens of the palace, where the story takes place. And they have become genetically altered, and MacDonald, presumably because he is writing for children, doesn't go into any great detail about what they look like. But, of course, this makes them considerably more disturbing, and what he shows is bad enough to suggest far worse. It wasn't until very much later that I realised this was very much like some of the scenes in "The Colour Out of Space" where the animals on the farm were, again, being horribly transformed. Now, whether this could have influenced Lovecraft I don't know, but it was certainly very strange stuff for a six year old kid to read. I can remember I really did have terrible nights lying there awake in the dark, just visualising the stuff. So certainly in terms of the earliest thing I had read that was my earliest memory of terror.

Dagon: I can remember reading that when you lived at home with your parents you very rarely saw your father, and that he became a sinister figure for you.

Campbell: To put it mildly.

Dagon: Has your father ever been the subject of any of your fiction?

Campbell: Yes, but not in a direct way. Partly because it's when I don't know that I am writing autobiographically that I tend to do it most directly or elequently. There's a story called "The Chimney" which is about a boy in his early teens, who is afraid of this thing that comes down the chimney on Christmas Eve, this figure that comes into his room in the dark. Now, I was never terrified as far as I remember it, I used to think Christmas was a great time and would look forward to it. It was only after writing that story that I remembered that one of the terrors of my childhood was, because I

never saw my father, and I really *didn't* see him, at all - he was just the footsteps on the stairs; the figure on the other side of the door - I became more and more terrified that he was going to come into my room at night. The one time when I would be most near to confronting him would be on Christmas Day when my mother, who was estranged from him from very early on in the marriage, would have a kind of seasonal moment of sentimentalism, if you like, and she would say "It's Christmas Day, go ask your father if he wants to come down for Christmas dinner". So I would go up the stairs, in utter terror, knock on the door and say "Would you like to come down for Christmas dinner?", and there would be a negative sound on the other side of the door and I would scuttle downstairs as fast as I could go and think, thank God that's over for another year. And in fact, in "The Chimney", the thing that comes into the room does turn out to be in a sense the boy's own father, although it's his nightmare image of him. But I wasn't aware that this was in any way autobiographical when I wrote it. And it's odd that it should take the writing of it as fiction to remind me of what happened.

Dagon: Your fiction has appeared under a number of different names. First it was J. Ramsey Campbell, you then dropped the first initial for your second book, adopted the name Jay Ramsey for *Night of the Claw*, and have written a number of works under the pseudonym of Carl Dreadstone for a series of Universal horror film novelisations. Why so many name changes?

Campbell: Well, Carl Dreadstone wasn't really a name change in that sense. It was a house-name, whereby a series of novels are written under a single name by more than one writer, because the publisher wants to market them as a single entity. I own up to having invented the name Carl Dreadstone in a weak moment over a drunken lunch with my then publisher's editor.

Jay Ramsey was one of those contractual things. Macmillan, in America, had brought several books of mine and looked as if they were going to be backed up for a couple of years in publishing them. It seemed to make sense for me to write a story for another publisher, but the courtesy of it was that it should be done under a pseudonym so that it wouldn't compete with whatever Macmillan were publishing. But I deliberately tried to make it as obvious as possible, and you couldn't make it much more obvious than Jay Ramsey.

I took off the "J." and have actually got rid of the first name completely, and so by law I am now Ramsey Campbell. Strangely enough, it was August Derleth, when we were first corresponding, who suggested that it should just be "Ramsey Campbell", but I felt it sounded more like an author to have the "J." on the front. He was right all the time!

Dagon: It was evident from your second short story collection, *Demons by Daylight*, that you could write successful horror tales without relying on Lovecraft's Mythos and style. So why did you return to the Mythos with pieces like "Cold Print"?

Campbell: Because I still felt that there were things to be done that I still wanted to do. Though, actually, "Cold Print" itself was the earliest of those *Demons by Daylight* stories. I had originally written it as part of that book and Derleth edited *Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos* and wanted me to give him a story for that, so obviously that was the one. Then nothing for several years. I went through the phase of, having imitated Lovecraft for several years, actually rejecting all of it. But what I was really rejecting was my dependence on Lovecraft, but I had to go through the phase of not enjoying *his* work either. A few years later I re-read Lovecraft and actually found his work more interesting and rewarding than I had in the first place. So, coming back to that, I really wanted to pay back some of the pleasure I had had from reading Lovecraft in, at least, one story, and I felt that I hadn't done that yet, that really cosmic terror, successfully. So I kept trying and eventually thought that the best tale to have done it was "The Colour Out of Space" whcih doesn't have any of the Mythos references in it, but clearly feels like one of those stories. So I decided to write a story, without the references or the structure of the Mythos. And I wrote "The Voice of the Beach". I felt that that was as close to one that I ever came and I don't feel the need to write any more Lovecraftian stories at the moment.

Dagon: Much of your latter fiction has been completely rewritten for second publication. Sometimes new chapters creep in and so forth. Does this mean that the original versions

aren't the ones that you, personally, wouldn't have released? In other words do I detect editorial butchery?

Campbell: No, no it's not that. It's me not being satisfied with what I had written in the first place. In the case of *The Nameless* where I re-wrote one chapter, I wasn't satisfied with one scene in the original story, it was basically too contrived. It had to do with the central character finding some occult magazines which would lead her to the next point that she has to go. In the original draft they were in a hotel lobby. Well, you don't find many occult magazines in a hotel lobby. It was Tim Shackleton, the editor at Fontana then, who felt that it was contrived, he let it go, but he had his doubts and I could never come up with an alternative. But amazingly all it needed was for her to find it in an ordinary newspaper stand and that's what I did in the final version. But no, it's not the editors; it's my failings not theirs.

Dagon: The Doll Who Ate His Mother is one of my favourite books dealing with the psycho on the loose theme. Why such a corny title? Surely, potential readers would glance at the book on the bookstore shelf, sneer at the title and pass it off as another Guy N. Smith rip-off. Or wwere you deliberately aiming to capture that side of the horror reading public at the time?

Campbell: No, not really. That title seemed to be the the only possible title for that book. It just came to me one day and I thought that's it! Of all the titles I suppose that's the one that gets enormous reaction, one way or the other. People either like it or hate it. The first publisher who bought it said that he was delighted to keep the title, precisely because nobody *could* be neutral about it. It is perhaps, deliberately outrageous, but I'm still pretty fond of it and I'm still pretty fond of the book as a first novel.

Dagon: Whilst on the subject of *The Doll Who Ate His Mother*: Was Chris Kelly based upon any real-life school acquaintances?

Campbell: The only thing which was vaguely autobiographical there, is that he starts off being fat as a kid and ends up as this thin, hippy type later in the book, which was more like the phases I had been through. If you have seen *Cold Print* there is a photograph in there, admittedly somewhat deformed by J. K. Potter, of me as a schoolkid. I mean, I really *was* that enormous, you see, so that was where I got the idea, by which, noone would recognise him as he grew up, because he wasn't anything like that.

Dagon: You obviously read a lot of horror fiction yourself. Who are your current favourite authors in the field? And what are your favourite tales of terror?

Campbell: Well, the finest living writer of supernatural horror fiction, in my opinion, is Fritz Leiber. Thomas Ligotti published a book called *Songs of a Dead Dreamer*, for which I wrote the introduction, which I think is an astonishing book and quite unlike anything else around. T.E.D. Klein I like a lot, *The Ceremonies* and his collection, *Dark Gods* have got the real Lovecraftian structure and sense of mounting cosmic terror to them. Dennis Etchison is, I think, the finest living American short story writer in the field.

Favourite tales of terror, ah, I'm just about to do this oddly enough. You've jogged my memory and made me feel guilty, because I have to do these lists now for J. N. Williamson, who is doing a writers digest guide for budding horror writers. I've done an article for that book and he also asked me to do my favourite novels, actually his notes are for post-war horror fiction, so it's not quite the same. If we are talking about the entire field, there would be "The Colour Out of Space", "The Willows", "The White People", "How Love Came to Professor Guildea" I think I would have in there, "Oh, Whistle. and I'll Come to You, My Lad", "Green Tea", any amount of Robert Aickman, and well, wait for my list, I haven't done it yet. I've got to do this for J. N. Williamson.

Dagon: Another love of yours, I understand, is that of the movies. These seem to play a very strong part in your fiction. Could you tell us some of the titles of films that have possibly influenced tales of yours?

Campbell: Yes, there are certainly moments when I have seen something in a film and thought, no, this doesn't quite work. And yet it's left a kind of residue of what I felt it could have achieved and these images sometimes pop up in stories of mine. In

Incarnate, for instance, towards the end the father's head head appears on his shoulders and is both pathetic , horrible and ludicrous and various other things too. Now there was a Japanese film of the late 50's early 60's called *The Split*. Which had this scene where this *thing* has this head pop out of his shoulder and he wanders around the countryside with this clearly fake head wobbling around on his shoulder. And yet, this image seemed to be both ludicrous and very horrible somehow. So this hang around with me for some time and finally worked its way into the story.

More specifically though, certain film directors. I suppose Hitchcock is an influence in the sense that some scenes are paced really. The way he slows things down, visually, not by slow motion, but simply by editing details one after the other, which gives that sense of ominousness, which strays into my writing. And, certainly the films of the French new-wave people like Resnais and *Last Year at Marienbad*, that single-shot flashback, I love these things. I find those images that appear out of time in the film disturbing and they often appear in my stories.

Dagon: Freidkin used them in *The Exorcist*; that single flash of the demonic face that kept popping up.

Campbell: Indeed, that's the kind of thing.

Dagon: From reading some of your critical studies in the likes of *Shock Express* and *Halls of Horror*, I would say that you know what makes a good horror film. Have you ever thought of possibly directing a horror movie yourself? It seems a popular thing for writers to do nowadays.

Campbell: Steve and Clive, you're thinking of.* No I haven't, I mean I haven't even managed to get my act together as far as writing a screenplay is concerned. Dennis Etchison keeps telling me I ought to try and do it. Well, maybe I should one of these days. I mean, I'm so busy writing prose, it's difficult to set aside that time to write speculatively. Well, maybe I will at some point when I really feel I ought to do it.

Dagon: Much of your fiction deals with supernatural forces at work. The occult seems to be pretty authentic in your tales. Do you personally believe in it? And if so, have you ever had any supernatural experiences yourself?

Campbell: Well it depends on what you mean by "the supernatural", I suppose is the obvious answer. I have not had any large scale experiences of the kind of which the stories deal with and I tend to be rather sceptical about them, to be honest. I think there is an undercurrent of sceptimism in most of the stories, in a way.

There's an odd review of *Incarnate* in *Publishers Weekly*, where the book gets praised for undermining the reader's grip on reality. Well I don't see what's good about that. What I suspect they had in mind was that the book undermines your complacency about what you take to be real. Yes, the occult is taken for granted in some of the books. *The Hungry Moon*, the new one, is about gullibility. What I found to be disturbing of late is the apparent willingness of people to rush towards any faith they can lay their hands on, so long as it seems to provide all the answers and you don't have to ask any more questions. I find this very disturbing and this is what *The Hungry Moon* is all about.

Supernatural, hmm, the few odd things I remember are related to my mother after she died. She was cremated and I took the ashes to the family grave, which is in Huddersfield. Now I had actually been there once nearly twenty years previously, and I went there on a Saturday not realising that there wouldn't be anyone there to show me where the grave was. I mean, I couldn't remember. I actually tried, to put it mildly, to find the grave. Now we are talking about twenty thousand graves, so I looked at about a thousand gravestones and realised I just wasn't going to make it and thought I'll come back next week when there is somebody here. So I stopped, turned for no apparent reason and I was standing next to the grave I was looking for. I had actually come to it by the shortest possible route. This struck me as being very odd. I actually felt, I must admit, as if I was experiencing emotions that weren't my own: that I had somehow been directed there.

And the other thing that happened was, in a way, even odder. A couple of years later I happened to go up to Bradford, where I had been invited to a press show of a film. And as I was driving back from Bradford along the motorway I suddenly realised as I was coming up to the turn-off for Huddersfield, which is where the grave was, that this must

*((Stephen King and Clive Barker, respectively))

be close to the anniversary of my mother's death. And I was listening to the radio and her favourite novel was being broadcast at that moment as I came up to the turn-off, and when I got to the grave I realised that this was the day she died. I mean, interpret this as you will. The feeling I get from that is myself as being one more thing in the tendency of reality to form very complex patterns. I can't accept the notion that I had been directed at the point at that precise moment because I don't see how you can have an occult force that is going to be able to set up a BBC broadcast of the serial at precisely the point when I happen to be in a particular place. But it was very odd. I certainly believe in synchronism, in that things will tend to happen coincidentally in a very useful way. But I think that's as far as I'm prepared to go.

Dagon: Some of your novels appear to tackle social issues, sometimes in the extreme. The Nazis come under attack in *Parasite* (aka *To Wake the Dead)* and evangalism is tackled in your new novel *The Hungry Moon*. Do you believe that horror fiction is a good place to deal with problems of society?

Campbell: Yes, very much so and I think this is one of the things I like very much about horror fiction. It seems, certainly for me, to allow me to talk about anything I want to talk about. The old question; Would I ever write about something else? Yes, I think, if I ever found something I couldn't deal with in this field, but so far I have found it to be a very eloquent and broad field. I think one of the things I am very much for is broadening the field rather than narrowing it down into a very literal description of horror. And I think *Obsession* does this, and a lot of people have pointed out that it tends to deal with everyday life in Britain at the moment, and I suppose it does in a way. While I am telling the story the novel is actually doing something else, but I find that attractive as well, that horror fiction is a way of letting your subconscious talk.

Dagon: On the subject of morals, from reading some of your essays, I get the impression that you are strongly against the censorship of video "nasties". Do you think the public should be permitted to view such gore-feasts as *Cannibal Holocaust* and *Driller Killer*?

Campbell: Well I have and I shouldn't see why others shouldn't. *Driller Killer* I felt was actually a pretty legitimate movie in its way. *Cannibal Holocaust*, well that's another matter, but that's not to say that others shouldn't see it. As for age grading, in America, the "R" rating which is pretty much like our "18" certificate is an advisory certificate. If you want to take your kids in to see *Driller Killer*, you can. It's not against the law in some States anyway and it really does seem to make more sense than have a blanket ban on people of a certain age having access to particular materials. I am much more in favour of letting the parents make an informed choice. The parent, if they are any good at any rate, will know more about their kids and what they can cope with, than the legislature, partly because the legislature is like a large, blunt instrument that knocks out all sorts of stuff to get the few things that it wants to achieve. Certainly, in matters like censorship the arguement is that some parents are no good at all and would let their children watch anything. But I think that here we are talking more in terms of improving education rather than using censorship as a convenient method of seeming to deal with something which is only a symptom in fact.

Dagon: So if you were a member of the censors board where would you draw the line on what gets passed and what gets cut out?

Campbell: Ah, that's very difficult isn't it? In terms of what gets cut out I wouldn't be in favour of cutting anything out, now obviously you are going to confront me with, "Are you really going to let them see *this*?". I mean, in America, if you want, you can release a film unrated, in America it's a commercial decision. There is a censorship board called the MPAA and you have to submit your film to it if you want to get a certificate. But if you don't want to cut your film in order to acieve an "R" rating, you can just release it complete as happened, as a random example, with *Day of the Dead* recently and *Re-Animator*. I personally would not like to cut anything out of either of those two films and it seems to me to make far more sense to allow the films find their audience. If they really are as outrageous, and I don't think either of those two are incidentally, as all that then it seems clear that the public will rise up against them, as indeed they have done in the past in some cases. I really believe in trusting people more and the law

less, if you like.

Dagon: So, don't you think there should be a dividing line anywhere then? Sometimes you get these underground films which involve sex with children and animals, not even things like that?

Campbell: Ah, I think that's a different matter. That is not a censorship decision, surely, because I think what I am against here is the making of the film to begin with. The actual, what is very clearly using children in illegal acts, which they should be protected from, there's no question about that. But that's not the same as saying, let's say for the sake of argument, you can have a cartoon which dealt with that same sort of thing, which I wouldn't particularly want to see, personally. But on the other hand no illegal act has been committed there so I would be inclined to defend the right of people to make a film if it didn't involve child pornography. It's difficult to say, now I haven't actually read this but I understand John Farris's new novel, *Son of the Endless Night*, involves sex with a very young girl. Now if that were made into a film it is pretty clear that it would be illegal to do it. On the other hand nobody seems to say, "We should also ban this book because it too depicts the act", and I think this is the difference, it's not the depiction that's wrong it's actually involving real people doing it, in order for it to be filmed, that's what I'd be against.

Dagon: Turning back to the Mythos again, your American collection *Cold Print* dealing with Mythos tales has sold very I understand. Are we likely to be reading any further Campbell tales set in Lovecraft's worlds? Or, do you think that the Mythos has been done to death?

Campbell: I think it has been done to death (*laughter*). Yes, is the answer to some extent but there are still good people coming along who can do more. I mean, although *The Ceremonies*, T.E.D. Klein's novel, isn't a Lovecraftian novel in the sense of using any of the references, I think it has the feel of one and I think that if a work that good can be done then I'm sure that there's still life in the old thing yet.

I don't know that I will write anything else, but you never know. If I can write something as good as it ought to be for me to want to offer anymore to you the readers, at all, then I might write it, but otherwise I think you are going to have to content yourselves with "The Voice of the Beach".

Dagon: So what would you say are your favourite Mythos tales of the many that have been written?

Campbell: Obviously a great many of Lovecraft's including "The Colour Out of Space", if you can call it one and I would, personally. "The Dunwich Horror" I like a lot. "At the Mountains of Madness" which is a very compelling vision. *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* I'm extremely fond of and think it's a fine, powerful book. "The Shadow Out of Time" again has that enormous sense of awe to it, which I think is really part of the great appeal of the Mythos for me.

Other people; "The Space Eaters" I like very much, a Frank Belknap Long story, partly because I think it really does achieve that sense of extraordinary terror with the images in the forest and I think its also a strangely touching tale about, what is clearly, Long himself and Lovecraft. And Long for once actually finding something that the Old Gentleman would have been struck dumb by.

I also remember one of the first and still one of the most powerful things I had ever read by another author was "Notebook Found in a Deserted House" by Robert Bloch which I think is a very scary, strong piece of writing and I think it was the first Lovecraftian story I had ever read. Who else have we got?. Well Brian Lumley's "Born of the Winds" his Wendigo story is extremely powerful and visionary. I think Brian really tapped into something there, which I hope to see more of from him in that vein, that awesomeness and largeness of terror. But I think ultimately that the Lovecraftian story at its best dealt with terror and awesomeness and a sense of something larger than what the story could describe. I mean, there obviously were some graphic descriptions, but I don't think that is fundamentally what it was all about. I suppose the final one, which is not a Mythos story, but I really think the feel of it is so close to Lovecraft that I would want to quote it is "A Bit of the Dark World" a Fritz Leiber story which was his attempt to do a cosmic tale of terror, just as "The Voice of the Beach" was mine, really. In

fact I think it was partly reading that story of Fritz's which made me want to have another go. And again, it's not Lovecraftian but I don't think there's any question that if Fritz had not read Lovecraft, he would never have written that story. That's one of the few modern-day Lovecraftian stories that really seemed, to me, to succeed.

So, when I think about it, there's so many stories that really do still give me that sort of powerful awareness. So there's certainly life in my feeling for it and who knows, there may be something else from me in the future, before I peg out after all.

Dagon: Finally, can you tell us your plans for future works? Do you have any big projects lined up? And if so, can you give *Dagon* readers a glimpse of their content?

Campbell: Sure. Well *Hungry Moon* is out now, in America, but will be out over here, from Hutchinson, by the time this appears, in January '87. Right now I'm writing a novel called *The Influence* which is a relatively domestic horror story, supernatural, but on a smaller scale. And I've got *Scared Stiff* which is a collection of erotic horror stories. "Tales of Sex and Death" is the subtitle we finally put on it, this is from Scream/Press. *Night Visions 3* which is a collection of stories by Clive Barker, Lisa Tuttle and myself which will be out in the States in October. There's *Black Wine* which is Dark Harvest in America, which is Charlie Grant and myself and there will be another collection after that.

And that has got to be enough, hasn't it, surely? Oh yes, there is one other thing. I edited a collection called *Stories that Scared Me* for Tor Books, and I promise you there will be stories in there you have never heard of, but I think if you read the book you'll be glad that you had. Well that's not too bad for the next few months, do you think?

Dagon: Well thankyou very much then, Ramsey.

Campbell: Thanks a lot, Carl.

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(BLACK MAIL continued)

Rik Shepherd. Nimbly leaping to "Fear and it's uses", we find Andrew Whittaker also dancing on HPL's grave. But what a good, concise article. Sound effects do work, if you choose them carefully. The most effective are often the simplest, such as footsteps ascending a flight of stairs. That might not sound much to you, but what if the stairs are your only way out, and you know that the owner of the feet isn't...quite...human....

Last issue's "R'lyeh Reviews" also received an unusual amount of feedback, here's some...

Tim Ellis, Sutton Coldfield. I am glad to see that *Dreamlands* includes an introductory scenario, as this was my major complaint with *Gaslight*. The scenario requires experienced investigators leaving the Keeper the job of writing scenarios to get the players to that point. Whilst "advanced" scenarios are nice, and, eventually useful, of more use would be scenarios suitable for beginners and those with only a little experience. This allows the Keeper to get some of the atmosphere in play before he starts any major scenarios. I would like to see Chaosium publish scenario books containing four or five short introductory scenarios, suitable for characters with no "Cthulhu Mythos", and also something containing Non-Mythos adventures (although still somewhat horror based).

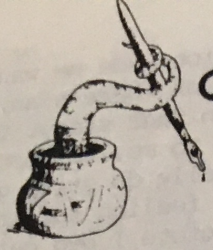
Mike D. Mason. With regard to the review of the *Call of Cthulhu 3rd Edition Rulebook*, I think John said what was needed. It seems Chaosium/Games Workshop have spent about five minutes putting it together. The only thing that makes the book worth having is the excellent colour prints and the monster pictures, although some of them are a bit dodgy!

Mark Morrison. The reviews covered some ground, and I squint forward to *Necroscope*. I have acquired a taste for Lumley, and have just come throught the Psychomech trilogy relatively unscathed. There were a lot of objectionable things about them, but they kept me turning the pages, and I particularly enjoyed *Psychomok*.

Watched my first Hammer film the other night, "Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde" which I quite enjoyed. Good inspiration for *Gaslight!*

Richard Watts, Elwood, Australia. I read *Necroscope*. Faaantastic! I read it in one day, and everyone here who saw the cover has decided that I am a bit... odd. One of the best new horror stories I have read for some time; I can only hope it does well.

(Continued on page 30)



The Acolyte

by Sandy Petersen

THE SECRETS OF CHAOS

Spawn of Azathoth (formerly titled "Throne of Azathoth") has now been released. It is boxed, and costs $19.95 in the USA. It contains seven separate scenarios, two of which take place in the Dreamlands, and an ENORMOUS load of handouts. It is definately the most handout-heavy release we've ever made - at least 50% more than *Masks*.

In the works are a supplement by Mark Morrison (yes, *that* Mark Morrison) & Penny Love about Mythos Australia. I wanted to call it *Cthulhu Down Under*, but all the Aussies I've heard from thought I was joking. It will probably be called *Terror Australis* (with a subtitle of Cthulhu Down Under). We already have the cover art by Tom Sullivan.

Other planned releases include a 1980s supplement and *The Great Old Ones*, the latter contains a collection of unrelated scenarios, each of which is based on the cult or person of one of the Great Old Ones.

Cthulhu in the '80s will probably not come out until July 1986, and it is likely to be a boxed item, along the order of *Cthulhu by Gaslight*, though comparatively more scenario-heavy and with less background information. After all, 1980's price lists would be a bit superfluous, no? The exact contents are, in fact, not yet determined, and I'd be more than interested to see a discussion in *Dagon*'s letter column about exactly what material we should include in *Cthulhu: 1987*.

A number of formerly loyal Chaosium fans have been upset by the slightly lowered quality of recent boxed releases - specifically the latest editions of *Stormbringer* and *Call of Cthulhu*, plus *Gaslight*, *Dreamlands* and *Spawn of Azathoth*. I'm not referring to the scenarios, rules, or art, which has remained as good as ever (he said humbly), but to the paper itself. The pages do get dirtier faster, and are slightly lighter stock, so they seem cheaper. The ink isn't as good as we have used in the past. Chaosium has been using a new, cheaper, printer. You gets what you pays for. However, I am happy to announce that we have heard the cries of the anguished multitude. We shall improve our quality, and no more cause for wild complaints should be forthcoming.

Some of you may have seen *The Evil Dead*, rather a fun little movie which includes a book clearly based on the *Necronomicon*. Tom Sullivan, the artist for most every Chaosium Cthulhu item, did the special effects for this movie. Some of you may have noticed that we didn't use Tom's work for *Spawn of Azathoth*. He has become unavailable to us for an indefinate period of time - you see, he's working on *Evil Dead II* (about which I know nothing).

In *Dagon 13*, Mark Morrison asked "If you are a Keeper, is a game Kept? And are the players Keepees?" I think that yes, games are Kept. But Keepees is an awful word. Let them be Inmates. Differing opinions welcomed.

* * * * *

GUNS IN CALL OF CTHULHU

Horror is a fragile genre. When horror is mixed with superheroes, you get superheroes. When it is mixed with science fiction, you get science fiction (with the notable exception of *Alien*). When it is mixed with action-adventure, you get action-adventure. With neat, spooky monsters. Horror needs to stand alone.

Call of Cthulhu is what you make of it. If you prefer a campaign in which all the heroes are ex-military men who blast old ones, deep ones, and dimensional shamblers into little quivering fragments with plastic explosive, flamethrowers, and mortar-launched Elder Signs, that's your business. But the game you end up playing won't be very horrific. Trust me - I know of such games. But, the investigators I've seen from such campaigns are generally *less* effective at disposing of threats and have a *higher* death rate than

normal investigators! I think that this rather surprising result is caused by three factors:

1) Players in high-firepower campaigns get intellectually sloppy. They assume that firepower is the answer to most problems, and eventually come to assume that it is the answer to *all* problems. Thus, when playing subtle scenarios such as "The Haunted House" (from the *Call of Cthulhu* appendix), they miss clues, shoot the wrong people, and generally fail utterly to stop the occult menace.

2) These investigators are generally very aggressive. I'm not sure whether this is because aggressive players like guns, or because owning guns makes one's investigators aggressive. In any case, they tend to rush into situations blazing away. This might work passably when they're facing a byakhee or ghouls, but if the Star-Spawn, or, say, flying polyps, you end up with investigator flavoured gelatin very quickly.

3) Gunfire attracts gunfire. As I've said before, guns are *dangerous*, both in real life and in *Call of Cthulhu*. Folks with itchy trigger-fingers (let's face it) tend to get into gunfights, whether vs. mad cultists, the local gendarmes, or even armed Cthulhoid monsters (deep ones, for instance, are perfectly capable of picking up and using firearms). And gunfights kill you. Even if the investigators' side wins, one or more investigators are likely to be killed or wounded, and thus taken out of the action. This is important to remember and worth repeating: a gunfight is a lose-lose proposition. Even if you win the gunfight, your team can be crippled to the point that you can no longer succeed in stopping the bad guys.

On the other hand, I don't ban guns in my campaign - they're available, and obviously useful. Let's cut away all the emotion (pro- and con-), and recognize weapons for what they are: tools which should be treated like any other tool. Sometimes their use is appropriate, and sometimes not. Your investigators should always keep guns' limitations in mind. A gun is a much less generally useful tool then, for instance, a coil of rope, or a crowbar.

Analogy Time: let's compare guns to crowbars. My straw man, Mac the Keeper, might reason this way. "It's perfectly possible to reason that crowbars should be banned in *Call of Cthulhu*, or at least kept out of the investigator's reach as much as possible. Indiscriminate use of crowbars can lead to the investigators getting too much information too soon (by prying open safes, locked cabinets, etc.), or unprincipled characters might start breaking into homes at night and robbing them, or jimmying vending machines." And Mac would be correct! Think how foolish a campaign would be in which this got out of hand - investigators carrying crowbars to fancy dress balls and on train rides; investigators making sure they had plenty of spare crowbars in case of emergency; investigators needing spare change prying open parking meters; and so forth ad nauseum.

If guns are viewed sanely, with neither over-enthusiasm for their virtues, nor panic at the thought of their vices, I think their use can be a benefit to the campaign.

Announcing the formation of

DAGON PRESS

I am now able to offer for sale several publications dealing with topics related to H. P. Lovecraft and the Cthulhu Mythos and other weird writings. Current booklets in stock include:

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Soft Books: Les Bibs series. The highly praised series of booklets listing all of Lovecraft's work with rare printings of essays on and by the man himself. Details available on request.

To order any of the above, send cheque payable to CARL FORD at 11 Warwick Road, Twickenham, Middlesex TW2 6SW. Tel: 01-894 6869 for stock check.

STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP

Dagon Press now has the following Necronomicon Press publications in stock as detailed in "Crawling at you".

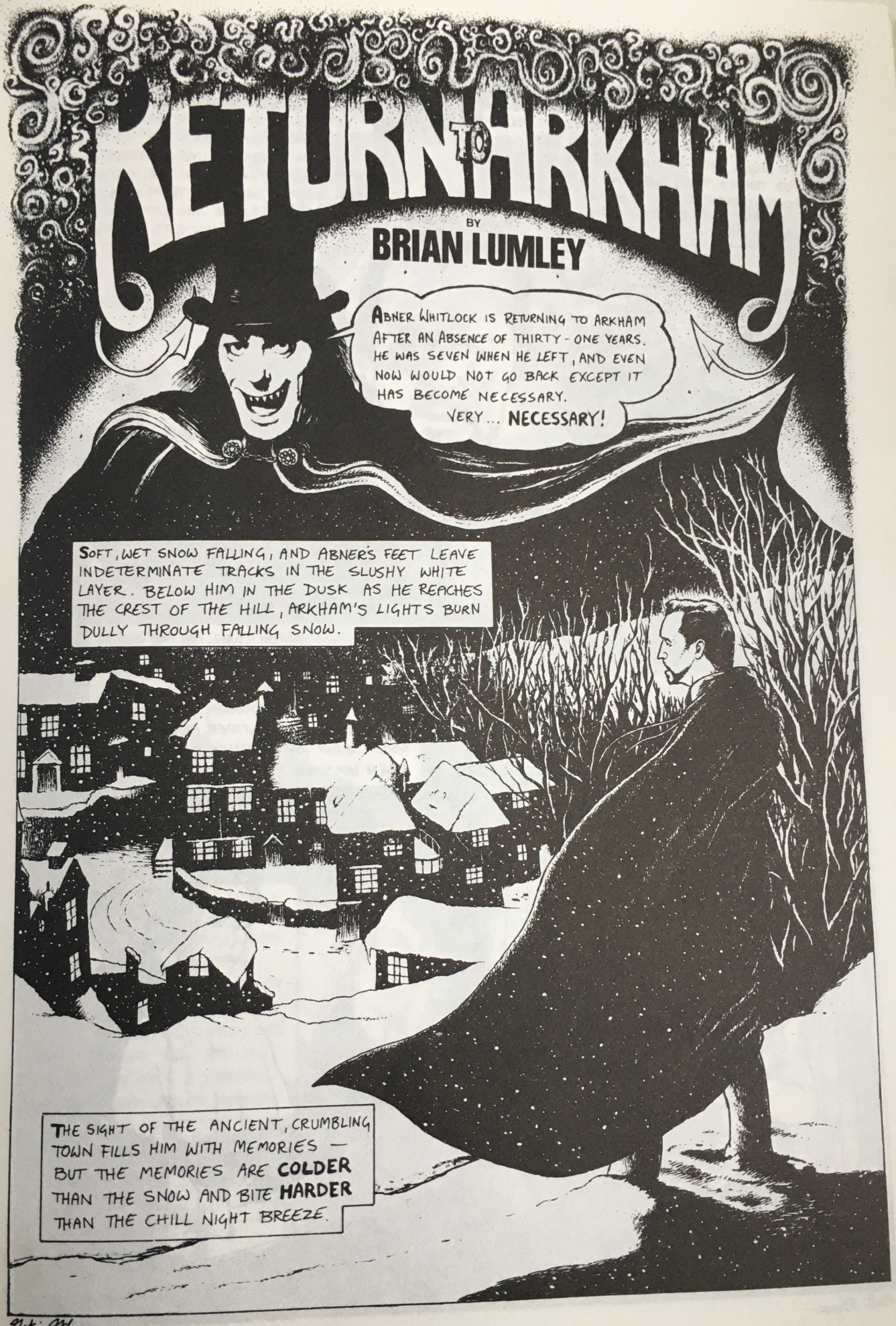
Lovecraft Studies #13 @ £3.50
Studies in Weird Fiction @ £3.50
First Writings in the Pawtuxet Valley Gleaner by Lovecraft @ £3.50
The Chronology Out of Time @ £3.50

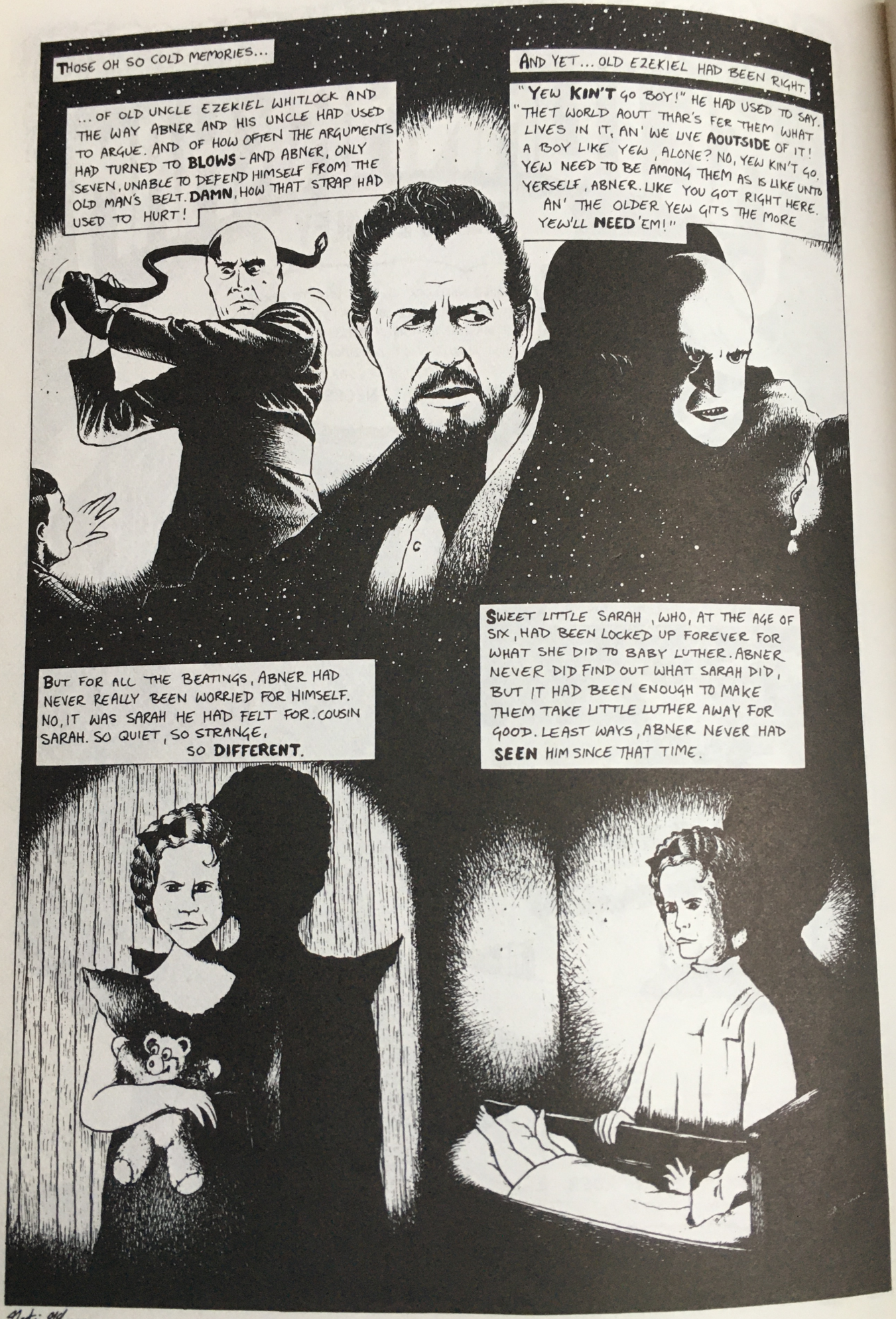
Australian subscriptions to *Dagon* can can be obtained from Mark Morrison, who has recently moved to:-

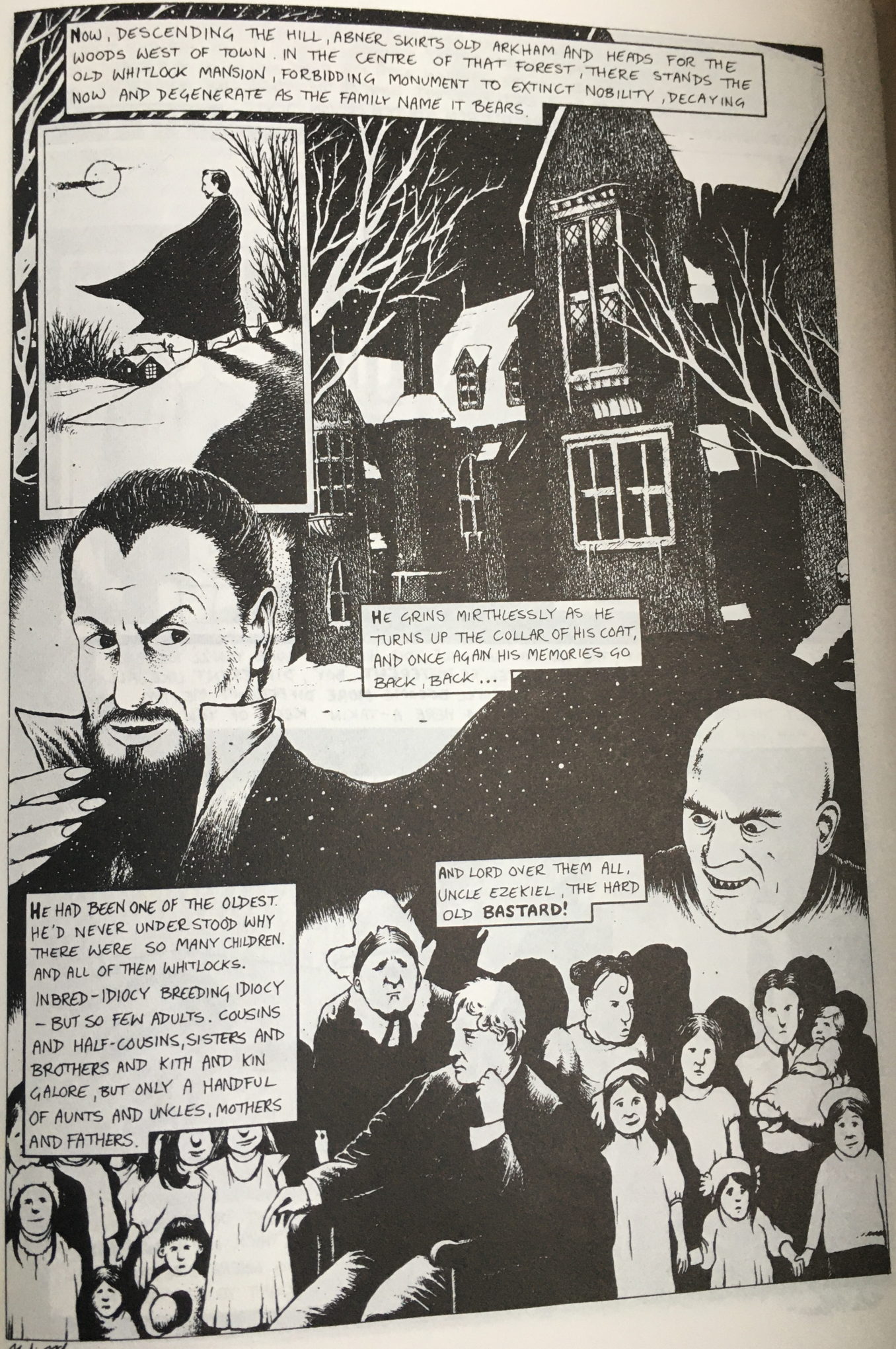
17 Harwood Street, Elwood 3184,
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

Questions relating to THE RED BRAIN'S TRUST to:-

Peter F. Jeffery, 21 Church Avenue,
Leicester LE3 6AJ.


RETURN TO ARKHAM
BY
BRIAN LUMLEY
ABNER WHITLOCK IS RETURNING TO ARKHAM AFTER AN ABSENCE OF THIRTY-ONE YEARS. HE WAS SEVEN WHEN HE LEFT, AND EVEN NOW WOULD NOT GO BACK EXCEPT IT HAS BECOME NECESSARY. VERY... NECESSARY!
SOFT, WET SNOW FALLING, AND ABNER'S FEET LEAVE INDETERMINATE TRACKS IN THE SLUSHY WHITE LAYER. BELOW HIM IN THE DUSK AS HE REACHES THE CREST OF THE HILL, ARKHAM'S LIGHTS BURN DULLY THROUGH FALLING SNOW.
THE SIGHT OF THE ANCIENT, CRUMBLING TOWN FILLS HIM WITH MEMORIES — BUT THE MEMORIES ARE COLDER THAN THE SNOW AND BITE HARDER THAN THE CHILL NIGHT BREEZE.


THOSE OH SO COLD MEMORIES...
... OF OLD UNCLE EZEKIEL WHITLOCK AND THE WAY ABNER AND HIS UNCLE HAD USED TO ARGUE. AND OF HOW OFTEN THE ARGUMENTS HAD TURNED TO **BLOWS** - AND ABNER, ONLY SEVEN, UNABLE TO DEFEND HIMSELF FROM THE OLD MAN'S BELT. **DAMN**, HOW THAT STRAP HAD USED TO HURT!
AND YET... OLD EZEKIEL HAD BEEN RIGHT.
"**YEW KIN'T** GO BOY!" HE HAD USED TO SAY. "THET WORLD AOUT THAR'S FER THEM WHAT LIVES IN IT, AN' WE LIVE **AOUTSIDE** OF IT! A BOY LIKE YEW, ALONE? NO, YEW KIN'T GO. YEW NEED TO BE AMONG THEM AS IS LIKE UNTO YERSELF, ABNER. LIKE YOU GOT RIGHT HERE. AN' THE OLDER YEW GITS THE MORE YEW'LL **NEED** 'EM!"
BUT FOR ALL THE BEATINGS, ABNER HAD NEVER REALLY BEEN WORRIED FOR HIMSELF. NO, IT WAS SARAH HE HAD FELT FOR. COUSIN SARAH. SO QUIET, SO STRANGE, SO **DIFFERENT**.
SWEET LITTLE SARAH, WHO, AT THE AGE OF SIX, HAD BEEN LOCKED UP FOREVER FOR WHAT SHE DID TO BABY LUTHER. ABNER NEVER DID FIND OUT WHAT SARAH DID, BUT IT HAD BEEN ENOUGH TO MAKE THEM TAKE LITTLE LUTHER AWAY FOR GOOD. LEAST WAYS, ABNER NEVER HAD **SEEN** HIM SINCE THAT TIME.


NOW, DESCENDING THE HILL, ABNER SKIRTS OLD ARKHAM AND HEADS FOR THE WOODS WEST OF TOWN. IN THE CENTRE OF THAT FOREST, THERE STANDS THE OLD WHITLOCK MANSION, FORBIDDING MONUMENT TO EXTINCT NOBILITY, DECAYING NOW AND DEGENERATE AS THE FAMILY NAME IT BEARS.
HE GRINS MIRTHLESSLY AS HE TURNS UP THE COLLAR OF HIS COAT, AND ONCE AGAIN HIS MEMORIES GO BACK, BACK ...
AND LORD OVER THEM ALL, UNCLE EZEKIEL, THE HARD OLD BASTARD!
HE HAD BEEN ONE OF THE OLDEST. HE'D NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHY THERE WERE SO MANY CHILDREN. AND ALL OF THEM WHITLOCKS. INBRED-IDIOCY BREEDING IDIOCY - BUT SO FEW ADULTS. COUSINS AND HALF-COUSINS, SISTERS AND BROTHERS AND KITH AND KIN GALORE, BUT ONLY A HANDFUL OF AUNTS AND UNCLES, MOTHERS AND FATHERS.

BUT FOR ALL THAT HE WAS HARD, THE OLD MAN HAD SLEPT BEHIND BARRED AND BOLTED DOORS OF STOUT OAK. WHAT HAD HE FEARED, ABNER WONDERED? THE OLD BOOKS IN THE LOCKED LIBRARY? THAT GREAT ROOM HAD ALWAYS BEEN FORBIDDEN TO THE CHILDREN. WITH ITS ROWS AND ROWS OF ANCIENT, CRUMBLING BOOKS OF ARCANE LORE. ABNER COULD EVEN REMEMBER SOME OF THE TITLES, LIKE ALHAZRED'S **NECRONOMICON** AND THE **UNAUSSPRECHLICHEN KULTEN** OF VON JUNZT.

YES, AND HE REMEMBERED HOW OLD EZEKIEL HAD FLED THE LIBRARY ONE LIGHTNING-CRAZED NIGHT, HOW HIS EYES HAD STARED AND HIS LIPS TREMBLED WITH NAMELESS DREAD.

OR PERHAPS... PERHAPS EZEKIEL FEARED ABNER HIMSELF. FEARED HIS **HATRED**... BUT WHAT HARM COULD A PUNY LAD OF SEVEN POSSIBLY HAVE DONE TO SO TOUGH AND LEATHERY AN OLD BUZZARD AS EZEKIEL?

"EF YEW DO RUN AWAY, BOY", THE OLD MAN HAD ONCE TOLD HIM, "BE SURE YEW'LL BE BACK. AIN'T NO WAY YEW'LL FIT IN AOUTSIDE. YEW'RE **DIFFERENT**, BOY, DIFFERENT. LIKE ALL THE WHITLOCKS. AN' AS TIME GOES ON YEW'LL BECOME **MORE** DIFFERENT. ME, I'M LEAST DIFFERENT OF ALL, WHICH IS WHY I'M HERE A-TAKIN' KEER OF YEW ALL. HEH, HEH, HEH!"

AND SLOWLY, SLOWLY HE HAD PULLED THE GLOVE OFF HIS LEFT HAND, THE HAND HE **ALWAYS** KEPT COVERED...

ABNER REMEMBERED IT NOW, AS HE ALWAYS REMEMBERED IT: THE SIGHT OF THOSE FIVE, LONG, THICK WHITE **WORMS** TWINING WHERE EZEKIEL'S FINGERS AUGHT TO HAVE BEEN!

Martin Gilbert

AND YET, INSTEAD OF SHUDDERING AND SCREAMING AS HE HAD SHUDDERED AND SCREAMED THEN, NOW HE ONLY SMILES HIS MIRTHLESS SMILE.
AND YET AGAIN OLD EZEKIEL HAD BEEN RIGHT, FOR DESPITE HIS HIDEOUS FINGERS HE **WAS** LEAST DIFFERENT OF ALL. ABNER HAD THOUGHT HE MIGHT BE WHOLLY NORMAL FOR A WHILE, AND HAD RUN AWAY **BECAUSE** HE WAS NORMAL. BUT AS TIME PASSED...
THE SNOW IS **DEEPER** NOW AND ABNER LEAVES A CLEAR TRAIL AS HE ENTERS THE WOODS. THE LINE OF PRINTS IS SHARP AS THE MOON SILVERS THE TREES. THE RIGHT FOOT HAS LEFT THE CLEAN IMPRINT OF A MAN'S BOOTED FOOT. **THE OTHER...?**
THE OLD WHITLOCK MANSION LOOMS LARGE NOW, A GIBBOUS MOON BLOATING BEHIND IT AND LENDING THE CROWDING OAKS THE ASPECT OF BENT, LEERING MONSTERS.
ABNER BRUSHES ASIDE CLINGING CREEPERS AND CLIMBS THE SNOW-SLIMED STEPS TO THE MASSIVE DOOR. HE REACHES OUT A HAND TO KNOCK... BUT THE DOOR CREAKS OPEN **OF ITS OWN ACCORD!**

WITHIN, HE MAKES HIS WAY THROUGH DIM AND COBWEBBY CORRIDORS TOWARD EZEKIEL'S OLD, HUGE ROOM. CANDLES, STRATEGICALLY PLACED, LIGHT HIS WAY.

THEN—

HE PAUSES BEFORE A DOOR WHICH STANDS **AJAR**, HESITATES BEFORE CONTINUING. FOR THIS WAS THE ROOM WHERE THEY HAD LOCKED SARAH WHEN SHE WAS SIX. HAD SHE PASSED ON THEN?

ABNER GROWS ANGRY AT THE THOUGHT.

HE SNARLS AND HIS JAWS OPEN, OPEN, OPEN—**IMPOSSIBLY!** BUT NO, HE MUST **CONTROL** HIMSELF—AT LEAST UNTIL HE STANDS FACE TO FACE WITH EZEKIEL...

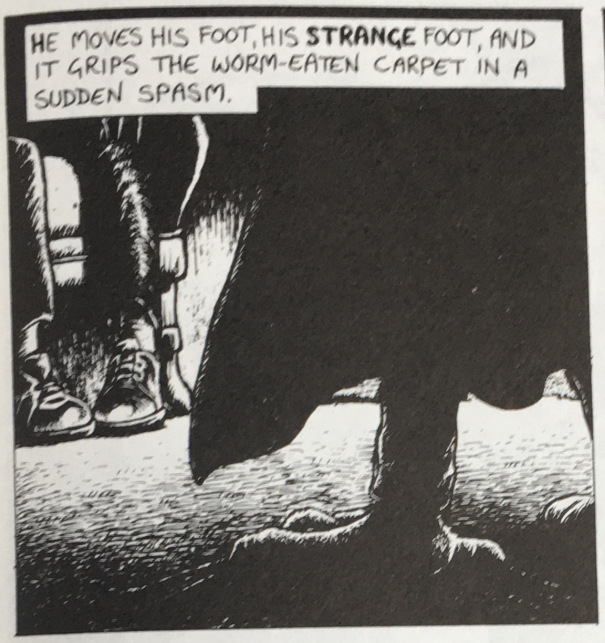
AND AT LAST HE ARRIVES AT THE DOOR TO THE OLD MAN'S ROOM, PUSHES IT OPEN, ENTERS.

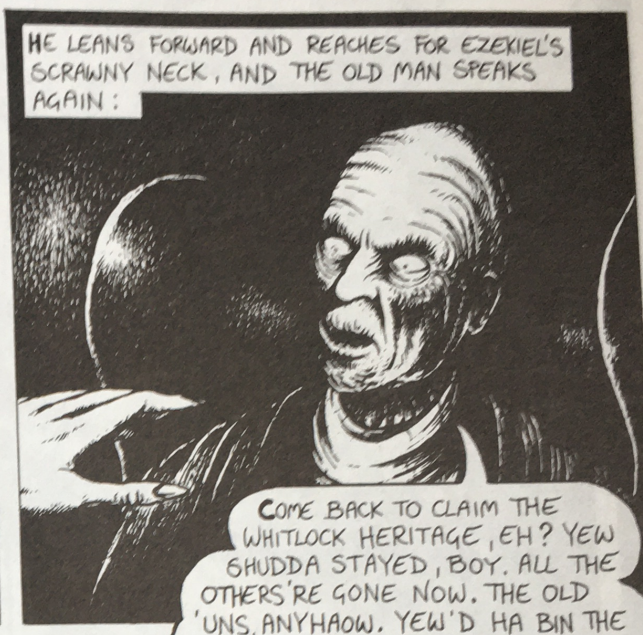
EZEKIEL SITS THERE, AS HE ALWAYS SAT, EXCEPT HE IS VERY, VERY OLD NOW. HIS RHEUMY EYES OPEN INTO SLITS AND SEE ABNER STANDING THERE. THEY OPEN **WIDER**, FROM MERE SLITS TO FERAL YELLOW GAPS IN HIS WRINKLED LEATHER FACE.

ON THE ARM OF HIS CHAIR HIS HAND—THE ONE WITH THE WORMS—LIES FLACID AND LIFELESS. THE WORMS ARE THIN, STILL, EMPTY OF LIFE. LIKE OLD, SHUCKED OFF SNAKESKINS. THE OLD MAN'S POTENCY HAS GONE.

Martin McKenna.

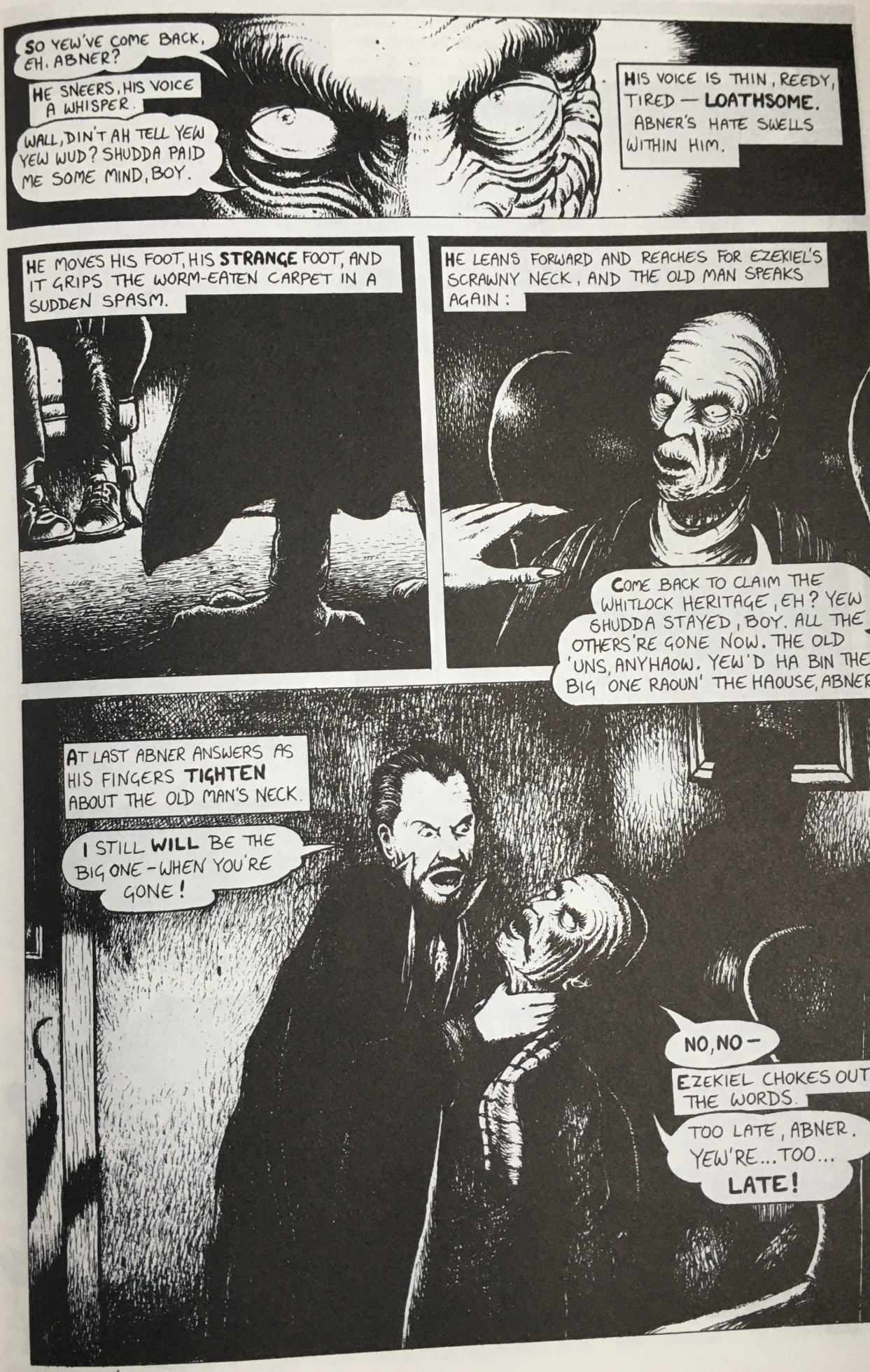
SO YEW'VE COME BACK, EH, ABNER?
HE SNEERS, HIS VOICE A WHISPER.
WALL, DIN'T AH TELL YEW YEW WUD? SHUDDA PAID ME SOME MIND, BOY.
HIS VOICE IS THIN, REEDY, TIRED — LOATHSOME. ABNER'S HATE SWELLS WITHIN HIM.




HE LEANS FORWARD AND REACHES FOR EZEKIEL'S SCRAWNY NECK, AND THE OLD MAN SPEAKS AGAIN:
COME BACK TO CLAIM THE WHITLOCK HERITAGE, EH? YEW SHUDDA STAYED, BOY. ALL THE OTHERS'RE GONE NOW. THE OLD 'UNS, ANYHAOW. YEW'D HA BIN THE BIG ONE RAOUN' THE HAOUSE, ABNER...

AT LAST ABNER ANSWERS AS HIS FINGERS TIGHTEN ABOUT THE OLD MAN'S NECK.
I STILL WILL BE THE BIG ONE - WHEN YOU'RE GONE!
NO, NO —
EZEKIEL CHOKES OUT THE WORDS.
TOO LATE, ABNER. YEW'RE... TOO... LATE!

Martin McKenna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WALL, DIN'T AH TELL YEW YEW WUD? SHUDDA PAID ME SOME MIND, BOY.
HIS VOICE IS THIN, REEDY, TIRED — LOATHSOME. ABNER'S HATE SWELLS WITHIN HIM.
HE MOVES HIS FOOT, HIS STRANGE FOOT, AND IT GRIPS THE WORM-EATEN CARPET IN A SUDDEN SPASM.
HE LEANS FORWARD AND REACHES FOR EZEKIEL'S SCRAWNY NECK, AND THE OLD MAN SPEAKS AGAIN:
COME BACK TO CLAIM THE WHITLOCK HERITAGE, EH? YEW SHUDDA STAYED, BOY. ALL THE OTHERS'RE GONE NOW. THE OLD 'UNS, ANYHAOW. YEW'D HA BIN THE BIG ONE RAOUN' THE HAOUSE, ABNER...
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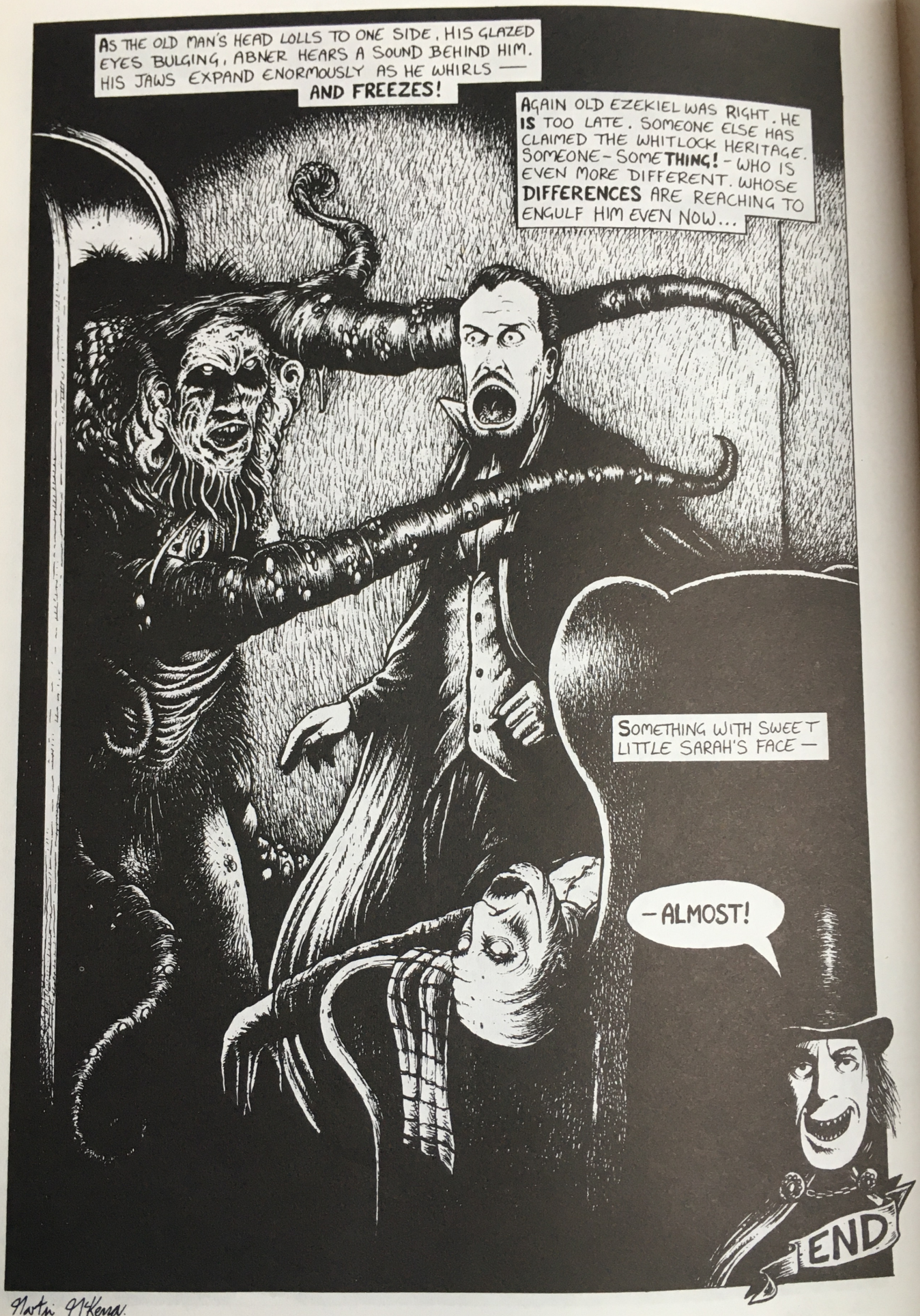
Martin McKenna


AS THE OLD MAN'S HEAD LOLLS TO ONE SIDE, HIS GLAZED EYES BULGING, ABNER HEARS A SOUND BEHIND HIM. HIS JAWS EXPAND ENORMOUSLY AS HE WHIRLS — AND FREEZES!
AGAIN OLD EZEKIEL WAS RIGHT. HE IS TOO LATE. SOMEONE ELSE HAS CLAIMED THE WHITLOCK HERITAGE. SOMEONE - SOMETHING! - WHO IS EVEN MORE DIFFERENT. WHOSE DIFFERENCES ARE REACHING TO ENGULF HIM EVEN NOW...
SOMETHING WITH SWEET LITTLE SARAH'S FACE —
— ALMOST!
END
Martin McKenna

R'lyeh Reviews

THE STATUE OF THE SORCERER & THE VANISHING CONJURER

Published by Games Workshop Limited. Written by Chris Elliott, Richard Edwards and Mike Lewis & Simon Price. 76pp plus cover. Reviewed by Carl T. Ford.

This is a two scenario adventure pack of which the former is intended for more experienced investigators and the latter for those with not so much occult knowledge. *Statue* by Chris and Richard involves investigations concerning the sinister death of Louis Schwartzvogel who was busy deciphering a mysterious parchment. The investigators must use their knowledge of the occult to discover exactly what the parchment means and from whom it was sent. Meetings with a Theologosphical Society lead to even stranger consequences in an adventure which keeps the investigators wits working overtime and which I found to be quite exceptional in its ability to run comfortably, despite its tendency to leap back and forth upon clues which many adventures would have buried during the course of play. In other words, this scenario allows play to centre on the decisions of the investigators - not the Keeper, something writers might care to emulate for future scenario publications. The plot is flexible and fairly original and written with a cunning efficiency that will no doubt lead players the wrong way in parts. However, despite its call for "experience" I can't see players having any problems in solving the mystery and the "nasties" don't look too mean, giving them all a good chance of survival.

Vanishing Conjurer by Mike Lewis and Simon Price is without doubt, the best scenario that Workshop have given us. The players should find the adventure fun since it not only calls for some shrewd deduction but also relies on their own personal skills as a "Magician". What? I hear you say. Yes, that's right. The scenario centres upon the disappearance of a leading stage magician who has connections with a magic circle which seems to hold the secrets to his whereabouts. In order to infiltrate the circle, the players characters must join the magic circle themselves and suitability is decided by their ability to perform several card tricks which are detailed in the appendix. These must be performed by the players acting as their characters, and whilst their methods seem pretty simple their effect is surprisingly authentic giving an extra dimension to the game which is lacking in many campaigns. I won't go into too much detail concerning what the piece leads to, but promise you that for both Keepers and players alike the adventure is definately worth experiencing.

Congratulations must go to Marc Gascoigne, the editor who has managed to compile a very entertaining package here. A definite "must" for any campaign. The production standards are very high and have managed to better those of Chaosium of late, and at a price running to under a fiver, the pack is a bargain too! With *Statue of the Sorcerer & The Vanishing Conjurer* Games Workshop prove they certainly are a company capable of producing top class merchandise at prices most players can afford.

ARTHUR MACHEN, ARTIST AND MYSTIC

Published by Caermaen Books. Compiled by Mark Valentine and Roger Dobson. 54pp plus cover Price £4 (incl. P&P). Reviewed by Carl T. Ford.

This is the second in a series of booklets concentrating on the life and works of Arthur Machen, one of the legendary figures of horror fiction, whose tales managed to inspire Lovecraft and form the basis behind several Cthulhu Mythos conceptions. This booklet is packed full of rare pieces by and about the great writer, which attempt to show a side of the man which casual readers wouldn't normally know. Content includes a selection of Machen's letters to Colin Summerford, a young scholar of the occult and their discussion on the subjects in the letters add up to some very interesting reading. There are a number of pieces by Machen relating to his occult background with the Golden Dawn and several of his thoughts are set out in essays by Simon Clark, Mark Valentine and Roger Dobson and a very shrewd piece by Ron Weighell entitled "Sorcery and Sanctity: The Spagyric Quest of Arthur Machen" is worth the price of the booklet by itself. There is plenty here to interest both the Machen completist and casual reader. I would advise readers to send for a copy too! From: 35 Grafton Way, New Duston, Northampton NN5 6NG.

The Body on the Beach

by Andy Bennison

A Call of Cthulhu scenario for one player

The body of occult writer Robert Fenton has been washed up on the beach of a tiny Cornish fishing village. *The Cornish Herald* has sent a reporter (the player) to cover the story. Before visiting the scene of the accident the reporter may want to make some enquiries about the dead man.

Edith Fenton: is Robert's ex-wife. They parted on bad terms four years ago following a long legal battle over the custody of their children. She will not wish to discuss either Robert or his work. If harrassed she will call the police. Robert's other relatives will be equally unhelpful.

LIBRARY INFORMATION: Any good occult library will contain some of Fenton's books. He has fourten titles to his credit and has co-authored a dozen more books with David Ash. None of Fenton's researches deal directly with the Cthulhu Mythos; he was an authority on witches, covens and witch trials. His most noted books are: *Voodoo Cults*, *A Concise History of the Salem Witch Trials* and *The Purge of the British Witches*. A LIBRARY ROLL will also turn up information about the scene of the writer's death; Gilmouth. It is said to have been the home of "Old Mother Marsh" a reputed witch who was supposed to have been able to call "sea devils" to her aid. Noone knows what became of her. She simply disappeared. More dubious books hint that she joined her servants beneath the waves. Her old cottage is said to still be in existance.

David Ash was best man at Robert and Edith's wedding. He and Fenton had been good friends ever since Ash saved Fenton in a drowning accident when both were teenagers. Since then Fenton has harboured an irrational fear of water and the sea. If asked, Ash will say that Fenton went to Gilmouth to research his new book *Old Mother Marsh - Fact or Fiction?* He had even bought the old woman's cottage. If a DEBATE or FAST TALK roll is made, Ash will read an extract from a letter written by Robert the day before he died.

"...I definitely think that I am on to something. Mrs. Parker might be right after all. I heard that noise on the beach again last night and in the morning found strange footprints in the sand. I think I know the cause, but dare not say. If it happens again I will investigate further. If my fears are proved correct then I will leave at once..."

If questioned further, Ash will say that he is busy. "There are some matters best left alone", he will cryptically add.

Meredith & Sons are the estate agents who sold the Marsh cottage. They will not want to discuss their client's business. However, if a secretary is bribed, she will say that Mr. Meredith snr. was very relieved to get the property off his hands after almost forty years. Although several people had expressed an interest in the house noone had wanted it after they had visited Gilmouth. The money for the house went to a member of the Marsh family resident in New England.

GILMOUTH

The members of this close community will not talk or welcome outsiders. They are not happy with the sudden interest that has been shown in their peaceful hamlet. Noone will be willing to offer the stranger a bed for the night, whatever the price. Locals will suggets that any reporters should leave at once.

A) *The Fisherman's Arms* is the only public house. The landlord has no rooms for rent, and anyone asking for food will arrive "just too late". None of the customers will want to discuss village life, Old Mother Marsh or Fenton's death. Everything will be done to

make any outsider feel as uncomfortable as possible.

B) *Doctor Clarke* will confirm that Fenton died by drowning. He will say that his body was discovered by Mrs. Parker.

C) *Mrs. Parker* used to clean the cottage once a week for Fenton and bring him his groceries. He asked her lots of questions about Old Mother Marsh and she spared him no details. She discovered Fenton's body when she was on her way to do her weekly chores. He was fully clothed. On his face was a look of sheer terror. Tightly clasped in his hand, Fenton had a small pebble upon which was scratched a five pointed star. She does not know what happened to the stone. If Mr. Parker finds out that his wife has been talking to the press he will threaten the reporter with physical violence if her name appears in the papers.

D) *Reverend Clive Simmonds* was frequently visited by Fenton because of his book collection and extensive knowledge of local history. He is the only villager who will aid the reporter. He thinks that Fenton's death was an accident. If asked about Old Mother Marsh, Clive will say that you shouldn't believe everything you hear. As far as he is concerned Old Mother Marsh is just a character used to scare small children. He will add that apart from the legends about the witch, Gilmouth has had a relatively quiet history. A number of boats have gone down off the coast without trace over the years, but that is only to be expected.

E) *Charlie Baily* is the oldest member of the community. He is still quite healthy, but is very senile. He runs the now derelict boat house. He constantly talks of his only son, Edward, as if he were still alive. He was lost at sea ten years ago, but his father still keeps a light burning at night, just in case Edward should return. If questioned about the legends, Charlie will say that he knows them to be true because he has seen Old Mother Marsh's children on the beach. They were "dark skinned men that looked like a cross between a fish and a frog". He thinks that they have stolen his son from him, but that noone in the village will believe him. The locals are very protective towards the old man and some of the young fishermen will get angry if he is pestered by reporters. They will grow even angrier should the reporter take the old man seriously.

F) *The General Store* is run by an elderly couple named Fitzgerald. They will be surly and unhelpful. Many items will be "out of stock" to strangers and those on the shelves will be over-priced.

G) *The Marsh Cottage* is a small, one storey affair consisting of a bedroom, living room and tiny kitchen. The furnishings are few and the house has a stale musty smell about it. All of Fenton's belongings have been removed making the cottage seem cold, unpleasant and lonely. Either side of the back door are two stone pillars that have been carved in the shape of two vaguely humanoid figures. Anyone who *fails* a CTHULHU MYTHOS roll will identify them as Deep Ones. A rickety wooden fence that is broken in places runs around the cliff edge.

H) This is a small cove once used by smugglers. It is well hidden and can only be spotted from the beach below.

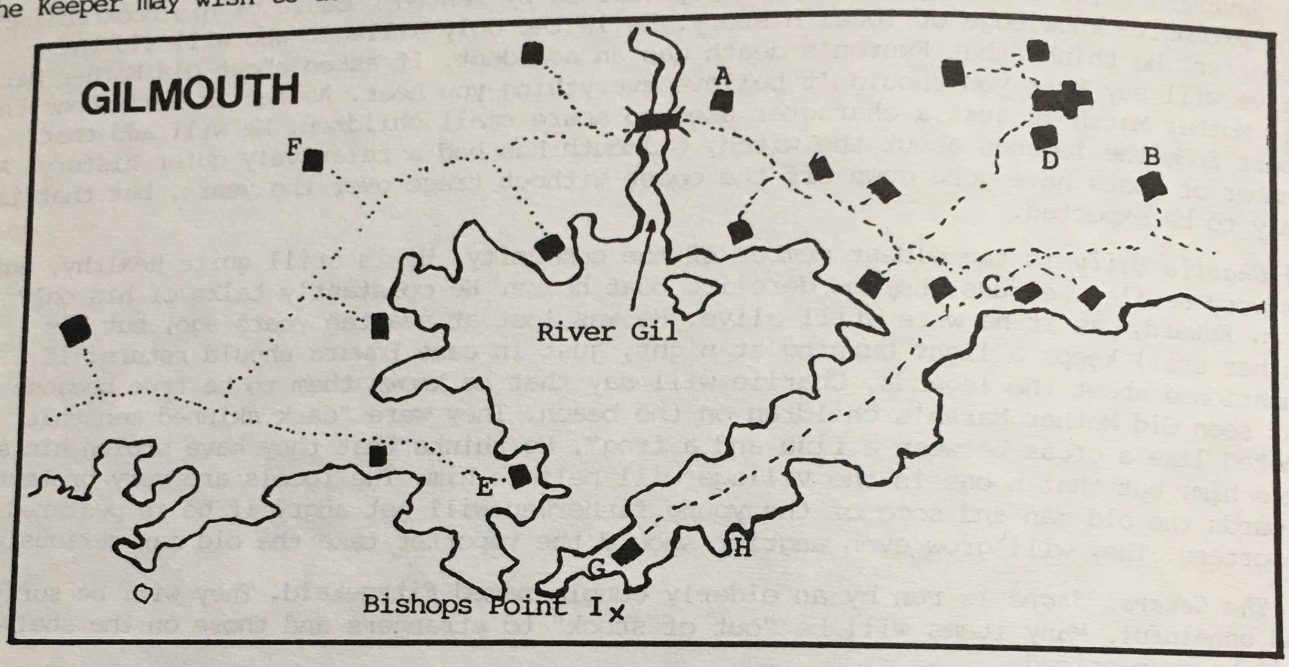
I) At this spot, deep beneath the waters, is the wreck of a small merchant ship that went down in the nineteenth century. There are many valuble items aboard. The exact value and nature of each is left to the Keeper to decide.

THE TRUTH ABOUT GILMOUTH

Despite the "obvious" signs, the goings on at Gilmouth have *nothing* to do with Deep Ones, Cthulhu or the infamous Marsh family. The locals seem to be hiding something, but all they want is privacy. Three unscrupulous treasure hunters have found the sunken wreck and over the last few months have been plundering it. Obviously they do not want anyone else to find out about their discovery. One of them was seen by Charlie Baily who mistook the diver to be a Deep One because of the poor light and the diver's wet-suit. It was the sound of oars and a flipper mark that had not been removed by the tide that first alerted Fenton to the fact that something was wrong. His overactive imagination caused him to jump to the wrong conclusion.

The following night Fenton watched the cove, but was spotted and captured. The three men decided that the best course of action was to run off with what they had already taken. They bundled Fenton into their boat and made their escape, planning to leave the writer somewhere, unharmed. However, they did not know about his hydrophobia. When Fenton came to, he panicked bacause he was at sea. In the ensuing struggle the boat capsized and the men fell overboard. The villians managed to swim to safety as they had wetsuits. Fenton was lost. His death was an accident.

Because Fenton's death has not caused much press or police interest the men have decided to carry on with their operations. Anyone taking up residence in the cottage may well hear them, as Fenton did. Whether they are armed is up to the Keeper, as is the value of the items the men have salvaged. Whether the legend of Old Mother Marsh is true or not does not affect this adventure, and this could be the topic of a further scenario which the Keeper may wish to devise.



A) The Fisherman's Arms Public House.
B) Doctor's House.
C) Parker's House.
D) Vicarage.
E) Boatyard.
F) The General Store.
G) The Marsh Cottage.
H) Secret Cave.
I) Sunken Ship.

Finis.

(BLACK MAIL Continued)

John Cadera, London. *Dagon* looks very professional these days, as to Dave Carson's artwork - it's the best you've ever had, keep the guy, pay him or something, anything but keep him!

Mark Morrison. The use of artwork was quite stunning in #14, your extra energies in reprinting it were certainly worth it. Loved the illustration of the shifty-looking bloke with the books; he really does have a "Now, where was that one about the Bowell-Cancer of Leng spell" sort of expression on his face. And Dave Carson running out of talent seems about as probable as the sun shorting out. Chop that man's hands off before he comes up with 'Ghoul Feeding' or something more blasphemous...

Brian Lumley. That H.P.hellish cover would have delighted Lovecraft no end, I'm sure! In fact all your artwork is good, and having Dave Carson on your side can't be bad. But that's not to knock the other artists; the back cover was also very nice, rather reminiscent of the work of Gene Day...

And that my fiends is your lot, for this issue, at least.

The following tale first appeared in the U.S. zine, The Dark Messenger Reader #1 *some eleven years ago. The author, Edward Berglund is currently serving as a U.S. Army sergeant but in his spare time has co-edited* The Readers Guide to the Cthulhu Mythos, *of which a third edition is in the works and has also edited the Daw collection* The Disciples of Cthulhu. *Edward has also had numerous work published in fantasy journals including* Crypt of Cthulhu.

WINGS IN THE NIGHT

by Edward P. Berglund

Salem, Oregon:

The sign in front of the off-white building stated that it was Oregon State Mental Institution. Surrounding the building were well-kept lawns, whose green was vibrant in the early morning light.

Some of the patients were already sitting in chairs located without pattern about the lawn. One patient, in particular, was sitting off by himself facing the rising sun, which glinted off his light blond hair and reflected in his deep blue eyes. His eyes held a hint of intelligence and a smile played about his lips. His hands were folded loosely in his lap.

Eric Moltone enjoyed the mornings much more than any other part of the day because the sun drove the shadows away. Moltone did not like the shadows, but since it was still early in the morning, he could not remember why.

EXTRACT FROM THE JOURNAL
OF
CHARLES B. GRITHS:

July 19, 1973. I feel a slight sense of accomplishment and pride in the publication and reviews of the sixth collection of short stories to bear my by-line. I cannot feel more so when I think of all the help She has given to me, with no question on my part about what my payment will be to Her.

A sense of foreboding hovers over the house, especially as I work on my new story, "Shadow Love". Maybe I should never have contacted Her, never have asked for Her help. As the days turn into weeks, the more Her presence seems to abide in the gloom and shadows.

For the past two years I have lived in total seclusion with the guard on the bridge gate and the Dobermans patrolling the island. But I still don't feel entirely safe. I know that the price I will have to eventually pay will definately be more than I have received from Her.

* * * * *

THE OREGONIAN

July 13, 1973:

Charles B. Griths' new collection from the Silver Scarab Press, *Shadows of Evil*, is all any true aficionado could ask for in the weird genre. The stories are not all one would expect from a single author utilizing a single theme — shadows — since they range from the hauntingly beautiful "Evening With My True Love" (concerning a man who falls in love with a were-cat), to the macabre "Anubis Comes Stalking" (about the opening of an Egyptian crypt), to the cosmic horror of "The Lurking Shadows" (which adds to the Lovecraftian Cthulhu Mythos).

Though each story touches on different aspects of the weird, running through each of them is the motif of shadows playing integral parts in Griths' plot lines. It makes one wonder what kind of mind this man has, to be so obsessed with shadows. Griths has yet to consent to an interview even after the publication of this, his sixth collection. Maybe he has esoteric sources for his information concerning shadows that we know nothing about?

* * * * *

Douglas Island, Oregon:

Dave Southern walked back and forth before the gate guarding the bridge that led to Douglas Island. Ordinarily he would be in the small guard box with the twin lights on top facing in opposite directions, located near the gate, but today he was bored with his job and was pacing back and forth before the gate in an effort to relieve that boredom.

He stopped in front of the gate and looked through the mesh at the bridge. The bridge was approximately seventy feet long and the road continued from the far end of it into a dense stand of Douglas fir and brush that seemed to cover the entire island.

He turned as he heard the dirty-white Volkswagen approaching the gate. It pulled to a stop next to the guard box and a young man of about twenty-five climbed out. His blond hair was tousled with a single lock of hair hanging down over his forehead. Underneath it lay eyes of deep blue and a strong nose and jaw. The young man walked up to him.

"Excuse me. Is this the way to Douglas Island?"

"Yes, it is. I'm sorry though, because nobody is allowed on the island except for deliveries of mail and supplies," Southern replied cheerfully.

"There must be some mistake. Isn't this the island where C. B. Griths resides?"

"Yes, it is, but he doesn't receive any visitors. He hasn't received any in the entire two years that I've been working with him."

"But I must demand that I be allowed to see him!" the young man blurted out as he started for the gate.

Southern moved with a swiftness and grace which belied his huge size and grabbed the young man from behind. With his right hand he forced the other man's right arm up behind his back, and with the other arm he wrapped it around his neck, exerting only a warning pressure. The young man struggled until he realized the futility of his actions. As Southern felt him relax, he released him from his grasp.

"I'm really sorry, mister, but like I said before, Mr. Griths doesn't receive any visitors."

"Isn't there some way I can get in touch with him?" the young man pleaded as he rubbed his shoulder.

"I'm afraid not, unless you contact him through the mail. Now I'll have to insist that you leave."

"I'll find some way to get on that island and see Griths," the young man touted as he turned and walked back to his car with his shoulders slouched.

"I wouldn't advise that mister. Mr. Griths has Dobermans loose on the island and they have been trained to kill any strangers."

The young man paused and looked at him for a moment before climbing into the car and slamming the door. Starting up the engine, he backed up in a semi-circle, and meshed the gears as he tore off down the road, tires spinning and throwing up gravel and dust in his wake.

Dave Southern looked at the retreating vehicle with a slightly puzzled look on his face. "Guess it takes all kinds," he mumbled to himself, "but I have a funny feeling that I'm going to see him again sometime."

* * * * *

Salem, Oregon:

Noon at the Oregon State Mental Institution was the best part of the day for Eric Moltone. He could relax in the lawn chair and soak up the heat from the sun overhead. Since he rarely slept at night, the nurses and doctors let him miss the noon meal and acquire the few hours of his much needed sleep.

He hadn't passed into a deeper slumber yet, for his mind was still quite active. He knew where he was, but only had a dim idea for the reason for his commitment. There didn't seem to be anything in his memory that would substantiate his being here. But the sun felt so good on his reclining body that he didn't want to spoil his enjoyment of it by going inside and talking with one of the doctors.

As he drifted off into sleep he unconsciously rubbed his left triceps, where the duty nurse had inserted the needle of the hyperdermic to administer his sedative.

The doctor looked out of his office window at the figure reclining in the lawn chair. It amazed him that his patient was able to do so without pain from the severe lacerations

of the flesh on his back. True, they were healing, but the sedative could not be the only answer, for the subconscious mind would still move the body as the brain received responses from the damaged nerve endings. Could there be another answer? The man should have been crippled, but the lacerations didn't seem to even bother him. It was as if something else was keeping him going until ... until what?

Salem, Oregon:

"Afternoon, Eric. How are you feeling?"

"Fine, thank you," Eric Moltone replied seating himself before Doctor Spranger's desk. "The sun really felt good today. I feel like I've slept for hours."

"While you were outside today, did you think about anything that you would like to talk about now?"

Moltone looked at the smooth face of the dark-haired doctor, whom he assumed was younger than himself. He moved his eyes to the doctor's — pale green, calm, patient, with a hint of eagerness for his answer.

"I've been having fragments of memory coming to me ... but never in enough detail to recall what they relate to. I remember recalling a man ... his name was ... uh ... C. B. Griths, I think. I ... think he was a writer, and that he lived on — I can't remember the name, but I think that it was an island — and it was located somewhere near Carter's Baytown ..."

As Moltone stopped talking and looked toward the window, a frown creased Doctor Spranger's face. Once again he was perplexed at what had happened. Every day at three o'clock, no matter how freely his patient was talking, he would stop. He wasn't surprised by Moltone's next statement, since it was the same every day — the last coherent and sane statement he would make.

"The shadows are lengthening and getting darker."

* * * * *

Douglas Island, Oregon:

The blond-headed young man finished placing his clothes in the waterproof plastic bag, along with his shoes and his notebook. He zipped up the black wet suit up the rest of the way and sat down to put on his swim fins. He then stood up, picked up the bag, and walked down to the sandy shore where the waves of the Pacific Ocean were breaking at low tide.

As he entered the cold water he was thankful that there wasn't a moon out. He could see the blacker bulk against the night sky that denoted Douglas Island about five hundred feet out in the darkness, and the thin ribbon of black which was the bridge connecting to the mainland.

When the water rose to his waist he launched himself forward into the black water and began swimming toward the island with a strong side stroke, the plastic bag trailing along in the other hand. The water caressed his body with a hint of its coldness as he moved through it. He would stop every so often to check his bearings on the island and then continue his swimming. After thirty minutes of swimming he finally noticed that the water had become shallow enough for him to touch the bottom.

He removed his swim fins when the water was up to his chest and walked onto the shore. At the very edge of the water he knelt down and scanned the island before him.

The beach extended back for a distance of twenty or thirty feet before turning into thick woods. The trees started thickly at the edge of the beach, with their heavy branches hanging low over the underbrush, but it didn't appear that it would hamper his progress or the patrolling of the Dobermans.

He moved as quitely through the underbrush as humanly possible, stopping every few minutes to look around and listen. He saw nothing, but the blackness of the night, interspersed with a lighter shade of black inhabiting the spaces between the trees and above the underbrush. He heard nothing but the quiteness of the night — no birds, no animals, no insects, and ... no Dobermans! Where were the dogs? They were supposed to be patrolling the island continually. Surely they had heard him moving through the underbrush or picked up his scent by now! But ... nothing!

Even though he could barely see his hand in front of his face, the deeper he moved into the interior of the island, the deeper the blackness of the night seemed to become to him.

It was as though his night vision had still not come to him.

After thirty more minutes of travelling through the thick stand of Douglas fir, he noticed that his vision was either getting better or that the darkness was dimming somewhat. Finally he broke through into a clearing which was inhabited by a large house crouching beneath a huge weeping willow tree. No lights were evident from his vantage point at the edge of the woods.

He slowly circled the clearing, looking for any sign that the inhabitant of the house was awake and up, and an ear tensed to pick up any sound of the dogs. There were neither. Griths wasn't going to like him being on his island, so there was no call to stir him up even more by waking him from a sound sleep. Eric Moltone settled down to wait for the daylight.

* * * * *

EXTRACT FROM THE JOURNAL
OF
CHARLES B. GRITHS:

September 23, 1973. I have finally completed "Shadow Love", interspersed with two novelettes, "Shadow Wine in the Sun" and "Ghoulishly, She Basked". I didn't really expect "Shadow Love" to come out at thirty-five thousand words — too short for a book and too long to submit to a magazine. Guess It'll have to be the feature story of my next collection, which I am going to call *Darkness of the Dawn*.

And that reminds me that in a little over five weeks from now it will be Hallowmass once again — the sixth anniversary of my calling Her. She continued to provide me with ideas for stories, but, in a way, I'm getting tired of Her shadow motif. But could I have expected otherwise from Her?

The sun seems to stay in the sky less time than it used to, and there have been more overcast days this year than any year I can remember. I have a feeling that this is to be the year. Funny, but it seems easy to write that now.

* * * * *

COUNT DE HAMMAIS'
SORCERIE DE DEMONOLOGIE:

It has been said that Nyarlathotep is the messenger of the Great Old Ones, and, as such, is not imprisoned beneath the Elder Sign. Supposedly Nyarlathotep is the only Great Old One not so imprisoned, but there has been little mentioned of Nyarlathotep's cousin Mynoghra.

Mynoghra, she who is called the She-Daemon of the Shadows, is not imprisoned like her brethren, but it is unknown exactly what her status is since she doesn't act as a messenger for the Great Old Ones. It is to be forewarned that if she is called, the opening can only be closed by the one who called her, since she is not imprisoned beneath the Elder Sign. The gateway must be closed after her. If this is not done, the caller and any that may be in close proximity may find that their lives are forfeit at her discretion.

* * * * *

Douglas Island, Oregon:

"What are you doing on my island?" growled Griths as he shook the blond-headed man awake.

Eric Moltone ran a hand over his face trying to get his mind working again through the spiderwebs of sleep. He looked around, up at the sky, and then at the man standing over him. Through his bleary eyes he saw a man in his early forties with his hair beginning to grow grey at the temples.

"What time is it?" he asked through a sandpapery mouth.

"Three in the afternoon," the reply came somewhat gruffly.

"And you're C. B. Griths?"

"Yes."

Moltone struggled to his feet to find that Griths was at least three inches shorter than his own five feet ten inch frame.

"Come in the house, young man, and tell me what you are doing on my island."
"Wher're the dogs?" Moltone asked, looking around once more.
"Now that's a good question, son."

* * * * *

Salem, Oregon:

Eric Moltone looked around the padded cell as the two attendants helped him into his straitjacket. He didn't mind too much, for they were only doing their jobs.
"Time goes fast," he mumbled to the attendants, but they made as if he hadn't said anything to them or himself. "You're here, sun's set ..."
There was a doubt in the back of his mind about the feasibility of incarcerating him in the heavy canvas jacket as the attendants clinched down the thick straps that held his arms firmly to his body, but there was nothing he could do about it now. The two attendants inspected their handiwork and left the cell.
As the sound of the attendants locking of the door behind them echoed in the windowless cell, Moltone looked around once again searching in all the corners for the barest hint of a shadow. There was none. The bright light overhead dispelled all of the shadows in the room, with the exception of his own which reposed beneath him. That one didn't disturb him, though. He felt safe — as long as the light was on. But they had conceeded — as always — to his request that the light remain turned on when it was dark outside. With it on the empty cell was peaceful....

* * * * *

Douglas Island, Oregon:

"So you're the young man who wrote the review of *Shadows of Evil* for *The Oregonian*?" Griths asked the young man, and when he nodded his head, he continued, "I really enjoyed that review of yours. And I'm glad that *you* enjoyed reading my stories, as evidenced by your review.
"I did chuckle over your suggestion that I might have esoteric sources for my information concerning shadows. However, that wasn't as far from the truth as you might suspect." Griths paused as he finished the remaining brandy in his sniffer. "Have a little more brandy?"
Griths arose to retrieve the bottle and refilled both his and Moltone's glass. As he turned to replace the bottle he noticed that the sun had set behind the trees. Dusk was already settling over the house in the clearing.
"If you will forgive me," Griths began, "I have to attend to something — something that has to be done this night of all nights. Excuse me."
After Griths had left the room, Eric Moltone rose and walked over to the windows in the west wall of the study. As he looked through them he noticed that the clearing was being partially illuminated by Griths turning the lights on in each of the upstairs rooms. Five minutes later the illumination became even brighter following the lights being turned on in the downstairs rooms.
Griths strode back into the study with a number of large candles in his arms. He proceeded to distribute them in various places around the room. When he was finished, he looked at Moltone and said, "Well, ... that takes care of that."
And all of the lights went out.

* * * * *

CARTER'S BAYTOWN *REVIEW*,
November 1, 1973:

Last night our fair city was plagued with a complete power failure stemming from unknown causes. The failure occurred just after sunset and lasted for approximately fourteen hours, creating quite some confusion to the populace.
When the telephone at the power station wasn't answered, the police were sent to check it out. They found the three members of the night shift in a heavy sleep, which took them an hour to be brought out of. When they were finally awakened they could not explain why there had been a power failure.
Investigations are still being conducted to ascertain the causes of the power failure.

* * * * *

EXTRACT FROM THE JOURNAL
OF
CHARLES B. GRITHS

October 31, 1973. The lights went out shortly after sunset, but the emergency generator started right up and relighted the house. There were no further problems until ten minutes ago when the generator went out. I have lit all the candles that I placed here in the study shortly after sunset.

I don't wish to relinquish my daily habit of entering something in this journal, even though I have an unannounced visitor — one Eric Moltone — in the house. He is currently sitting in my easy chair drinking my brandy and reading a carbon copy of my story, "Shadow Love", while I enter these words.

Earlier this year I had the premonition that this would be the year that She asks for Her payment for services rendered. And now that the day has arrived, I wish that there were some way I could undo what I have done. True, I have received monetary rewards and literary recognition, but what worth are these to me if I can no longer enjoy them?

This would never have happened if I had not come across the Frenchman's book and the Arab's book. One, without the other, and contact would never have been established. And, then, I was deceived, for She came in the guise of a beautiful woman — lovely, enchanting, exotic ... deadly. It was only recently that I perused *The O'Khymer Revelations* at the library of the University of Nyingtove, and found that Her *true* appearance is — Mynoghra, the She-Daemon of the Shadows, dark cousin to the Mighty Messenger, Nyarlathotep.

If this is truly the night that She will come, I hope She doesn't bring the Hell-Hounds with Her!

THE O'KHYMER REVELATIONS:

Mynoghra is the dark cousin of Nyarlathotep. She is unbound by the Elder Sign or the Star-Stones from M'lha. She goes where she wills on membranous wings, unfettered and unbound. Her alien visage is enough to turn a man's mind to solid stone — leering inhuman eyes, tentacled hair, a mouth opening that encompasses all eternity. Even though she may grant the unwary favours, she is truly a She-Daemon of the Shadows.

And accomanying her are the Hell-Hounds, the abominable spawn of her mating with Shub-Niggurath . Though little is known about the Hell-Hounds, they bear some alien relationship to the Hounds of Tindalos, but are unbound by the non-angles of our man-made universe.

* * * * *

EXTRACT FROM THE JOURNAL
OF
CHARLES B. GRITHS:

October 31, 1973 (continued). Have looked in vain through de Hammais' book and Ibn el-Badawi's *Kitab Rasul al-Akbarin*, but I can find nothing that will tell me how to close the gateway. Since it is open, She can come through at any time She desires. I have to close it ... I have to close it!

I must have been speaking out loud, for my visitor is looking at me in a very strange manner. I would have liked to have sent him back to the mainland, but I couldn't vouch for his safety in the darkness. He probably wouldn't have been safe anywhere on the island — even inside this house — when She comes.

Oh, my God! The candles! They're being extinguished one by one, plunging the study into darkness. I hear the flapping of wings above the house. Could it be Her already? It must be Her, it's midnight! And that other sound ... could it be the ...

* * * * *

A NON-SPECIFIC AREA IN INTERDIMENSIONAL SPACE:

She gently glided through the blackness on her membranous wings, searching for the opening. She knew that she would be able to find it, because the opening was a lighter shade of black — not light enough to endanger her existance, but light enough for her

to home in on it unnerringly.

She knew that the time was near. She had made a pact with the entity and the time of payment was near. Her thoughts dwelt on the ecstacy that awaited her.

This time she would not have to alter her form as she had to on previous times. Her form in the entity's dimension was vastly different from that in her own dimension, but it wouldn't be the same manifestation that the entity had perceived the times before this. Those times it had been necessary for physical contact to take place before communication could be brought about. This time there would be no need for communication. She absently wondered if her true form would seem repellent to the entity as its did to her.

There! The opening was close and she headed toward it. As she passed through the opening interdimensional electrical charges raced through her form, changing it, altering it, disrupting it. And now she was through.

Below her stood the stone structure on the land mass, surrounded by the non-sentient plants. Above her roiled the gaseous masses, obscuring those hideous little points of light that she detested out of an inner fear. She heard the sound of her offspring coming through the opening behind her. The time was now!

* * * * *

Douglas Island, Oregon:

Eric Moltone burst out of the door of the house in the clearing as if the hounds of Hell were right behind him. And he didn't disbelieve the possibility of that after what had occurred within the house. As the screen door banged into place, he raced across the clearing and entered the trees, heading in the direction of the mainland — he hoped!

A deeper blackness seemed to emanate from the house and follow him. Its speed was unimpeded by the trees as much as they slowed down the young man. He looked over his shoulder and saw the darkness moving toward him and tried to increase his speed.

A sound came to his ears as of the baying of hounds and the flapping of wings — and it definately wasn't the Dobermans that were supposed to be patrolling the island. But what was following him could make him as dead as the Dobermans, except the Dobermans wouldn't take his soul like that ... thing ... had seemed to take the soul of his host, Charles B. Griths. What had occurred within the house was etched into his mind, as if the lights had been on, instead of being off. After the ... thing ... had finished with Griths before his eyes, it had turned on him ...

He ran through a thick stand of underbrush which concealed a rotting log. His right foot came down upon it and fell through. Trying to regain his balance, the toe of his other shoe caught the log and he fell forward into a slight break of the brush.

As he struggled up to his hands and knees, a series of sharp pains lanced through his back, starting at his shoulders and ending at his waist. He screamed, unthinkingly, hoping the pain might go away, but it erupted again, anew. He had to get off this damn island, a deeper part of his mind yelled at him. Through the pain he regained his feet and plunged on through the trees and underbrush for what seemed like hours.

* * * * *

Douglas Island, Oregon:

Dave Southern turned, startled by the screams coming from the island and he looked down the bridge to where the road disappeared into the trees. He stood there for fifteen or twenty minutes to see if the screams would be repeated. When they weren't, he turned and walked back to the guard box.

As he entered his required hourly report in the log book, the screams sounded once more. But this time they seemed to have grown closer. Southern hesitated, a subtle hook of fear catching him at the lower portion of his conscious mind, before gathering his courage and stepping out of the guard box.

He stood in front of the gate looking through the mesh at the length of the bridge. His eyes darted back and forth as he searched the course of the structure. Two-thirds of the way down he noticed movement. Something was coming towards him and getting closer with each second. Unconsciously, Southern moved backward one step at a time.

When the moving object collided with the locked gate, Dave Southern's right hand had moved down to his holstered automatic pistol. He stopped with the pistol half-way out of

the holster as he recognised the blond-headed young man from the day before, hanging by his fingertips from the gate's mesh, great sobs wracking his body.

As the young man dropped from the gate to the ground, Southern broke out of his lethargy, re-holstered the automatic, and moved towards him. The young man was illuminated by one of the twin lights over the guard box and Southern could see that the back of the man's shirt had been shredded, and assumed from the amount of blood, the skin and muscle beneath it.

* * * * *

Salem, Oregon:

... so peaceful with the naked light bulb over his head, dispelling all of the shadows he dreaded from the padded cell. He wondered what time it was. Thoughts began racing through his mind, each one as elusive as the one before it. Eric Moltone managed to stay one of his thoughts and concentrated on its contents, turning it over until he realised what it was. A shudder raced up his spine and set the hairs on the back to stand on end.

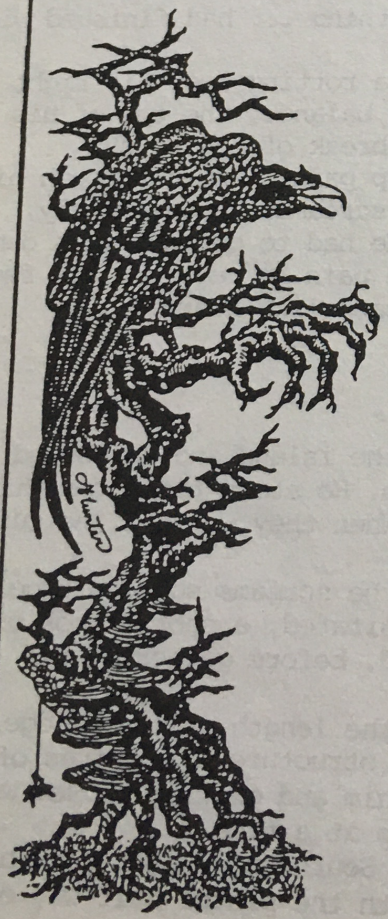
My God! he thought to himself. What day is it? Unless it is ... that day! And if it is All Hallow's Eve, then it must now be close to midnight. One year since he had met C. B. Griths. One year since his flight through the woods on Douglas Island to escape from ... from what?

The overhead light brightened momentarily and then went out, plunging the cell into complete darkness. The far-off sound of baying hounds and flapping wings came to his ears.

Eric Moltone began struggling within the confines of his straitjacket.

"No! Mynoghra spare me!"

* * * * *



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The Red Brain's Trust

Desmond Lewis of Coulsdon has written to ask about Lovecraft's attitude to astrology in particular, and the occult in general.

The reader of lovecraft's *Selected Letters* need not probe far into that work to discover Lovecraft's attitude to astrology. The second letter (*Selected Letters I*, pp 4-5) recounts his anti-astrology campaign of 1914 in the columns of *The Providence Evening News*. An astrologer named Hartmann had contributed some pieces to *The News* on the subject, and Lovecraft replied in two articles *Science versus Charlatanry* and *The Falsity of Astrology*. The titles of these articles make their tone clear enough, but in his letter HPL uses such phrases as "the usual pernicious fallacies of that occult art" (*Selected Letters I* p 4) which makes his point of view even clearer. He continued the campaign against Hartmann with satirical pieces titled *Astrology and the Future* and *Delavan's Comet and Astrology* in which he made increasingly wild and improbable predictions.

When Lovecraft met Houdini; for whom he ghost-wrote *Imprisoned with the Pharaohs*, they discovered that they had a common interest in exposing occult fraud. Houdini commisioned Lovecraft to write an anti-astrological piece which he completed as a rush-job in October 1926 and was paid $75 for it. (See *Selected Letters II* pp 76 and 79). I have been unable to discover whether this was published, if it did appear it was presumably under Houdini's name. Lovecraft's attitude to astrology did not mellow with the passing of the years. As late as 1933 we find, in a letter to E. Hoffman Price, Lovecraft referring to "refuting its puerile claims" (*Selected Letters IV* p 153). Price did believe in astrology and went so far as to prepare and publish Lovecraft's horoscope (*HPL* published by Meade & Penny Frierson pp 12-16). Another Lovecraft correspondant who took astrology seriously was, of course, Virgil Finlay.

By his own account, Lovecraft had no belief in the supernatural at all, after a youthful flirtation with paganism (see, for example, *Selected Letters I* pp 300-301) and he took the claims of religion in much the same way as those of astrology (numerous examples include *Selected Letters I* p 10-11 & 44-45; *III* 143-4 & 389-91; *V* 116-9 & 239-43). The most positive religious statement of which I know in Lovecraft's work is "I was, and still am, pagan to the core" *Selected Letters I* p 301).

In 1924 Lovecraft had "a rush order for three chapters of a book on American superstition" from a Miss Tucker (*Selected Letters I* p 336) for which he considered that he would have to do a vast amount of preliminary reading". If the word "vast" is not an exageration, this argues that he was less than perfectly familiar with American superstitions. I don't know what happened to the piece on superstition for Miss Tucker, but another project on superstition certainly survives in an incomplete form. Following the piece on astrology, Houdini commisioned a general work on superstition from Lovecraft and his friend C. M. Eddy Jr. This would have been of book length but, before it reached completion, Houdini was taken ill and died. His widow did not wish to proceed with the project and it was abandoned shortly afterwards. What there is of it appeared in *The Dark Brotherhood* (Arkham House, 1966) pp 246-61 under the title of *The Cancer of Superstition*, which gives some idea of its tone.

It seems that the origin of the occult details in *The Horror at Red Hook* furnishes us with an ample demonstration of Lovecraft's shortage of information on the "real" occult. In a letter, apparently dating to 1929, reproduced in *The Occult Lovecraft* Gerry de la Ree, 1975) Lovecraft speaks rather vaguely of taking the magical formulae from "a history of magic" (ibid p 23). However, in 1925, shortly after writing the story, Lovecraft made the observation to Clark Ashton Smith: "I bedeck my tale with incantations copied from the "Magic" article in the 9th edition of the Britanica" (*Selected Letters II* p 28). He goes on to say that he'd like some less obvious sources for such things, which makes it plain that the reason for his using *The Encyclopedia Britanica* as an occult textbook was, indeed, a shortage of information on the "real" occult.

It is evident that Lovecraft made good his lack of knowledge of the "real" occult in later years, in 1936 he implies, in a letter to Willis Conover, that he had read Eliphas Levi's books; however, he states that he doesn't own copies of them (*Selected Letters V* p 286; the letter is set in its context in *Lovecraft At Last* Carrollton Clark, 1975 pp

30-34). His attitude to the occult did not mellow over the years, though. Writing to August Derleth in 1931 Lovecraft observes "one great cause of "occult" belief is the defenceless state of mind bequeathed by our justly credulous (because necessarily uninformed) past" (*Selected Letters III* p 444). The following year he wrote to Robert E. Howard concerning observations of occult phenomena: "each soberly related incident involves some basic error of perception, or some inventive magnification in the course of narration and repetition" (*Selected letters IV* p 45). On fortune telling he concluded in 1937 that "all prophetic efforts are futile" (*Selected Letters V* p 385). As to his opinion of books on the "real" occult, he wrote to Willis Conover in 1936: "you will undoubtedly find all this stuff very disappointing. It is flat, childish, pompous and unconvincing..." (*Selected Letters V* p 287) which, no doubt, sums up Lovecraft's attitude to the occult in general.

* * * * *

Andy Bennison of Bamber Bridge poses the following question: "What do you think of De Camp's criticism of the way in which Derleth exploited HPL's name? (*Lovecraft: A Biography* p 434). Here I'm thinking more of the "posthumous collaborations" rather than demanding reprint fees."

Exploit seems, at best, a very harsh word to use in this context, carrying, as it does, the implication of using another's efforts for one's own base ends. Having read the passage in de Camp's biography of Lovecraft, it seems to me to refer to Derleth's Mythos fiction and, more especially, the posthumous collaborations. In the latter Derleth certainly used Lovecraft's name, though it is doubtful whether his ends in doing so justify the use of the word "exploit".

The aim of exploitation is generally financial gain, fame, power, sexual gratification or something of the sort. In the case of Derleth's use of Lovecraft's name we can obviously rule out the last two. One assumes that Derleth *did* make some money out of his Mythos stories and the posthumous collaborations - or, at least, one hopes so. However, this cannot have amounted to any great fortune and was, almost certainly, less money than Derleth could have expected to make had he turned his talents in a more obviously profitable direction. Two things which Lovecraft and Derleth seem to have had in common are considerable energy and a lot of (often misdirected) talent. A point on which they sharply diverged was business acumen, of which Lovecraft seems to have had virtually none, while Derleth must have had a fairly good nose for business. Anyone who might doubt Derleth's business skills has only to consider the Arkham House story - it was not a matter of luck that Arkham House prospered until Derleth's death (and afterwards) while so many small presses sprang up only to vanish. This being so, it is obviously the case that had August Derleth applied himself single-mindedly to making money he could have been a great deal richer than he was. Much of what Derleth did to perpetuate the names of Lovecraft and other writers whom he admired, involved small financial rewards for his efforts.

That leaves us, I think, with fame - probably what is meant by the passage in de Camp's book (though it isn't entirely clear). It is hard to say where Derleth's fame will ultimately rest. There are those who think, and undoubtedly with good reason, that Derleth's best work was his poetry and regional novels. Lovecraft observed that "All genuine art, I think, is local and rooted in the soil" (*Selected Letters II* p 131). One cannot but suspect, though, that this material is likely to be most appealing to those who know and love Wisconsin - a more restricted audience - I imagine - than there is for macabre tales. August Derleth will certainly be remembered as an editor: his anthologies were always first class - one did not need to look at the contents page to know that a new one was well worth its purchase price; his work as the brain behind Arkham House is legendry and was instrumental in saving the work of such authors as H. P. Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith from oblivion. There is, however, no question of exploitation in Derleth's fame here - whatever fame he has received was certainly well earned. Returning to his Mythos tales and the posthumous collaborations - it seems unlikely that Derleth's fame will rest on these, indeed, he seems to have received more abuse than praise for these works!

It is, of course, impossible to say whether Derleth expected more in fortune or fame from his use of Lovecraft's name than he actually received. On the whole, it seems better to err on the side of charity rather than harshness. Some will undoubtedly wish to say that Derleth used the expanding Mythos to develop his own ideas at the expense of Lovecraft's. Such a view, however, ought to take into account the strong possibility that

(Continued on page 7)

BLACK MAIL

Jack Boulter, Suffolk. "What Is The Cthulhu Mythos" was a superb article, though I'm not too sure of the 100% personal bias!! I'm no Lovecraft purist, but I can understand how Robert feels about Derleth's tamperings on a previously unique Mythos - I must admit, the Derleth vision of Elder Gods as caped crusaders gets up my nose too!

Mark Samuels, Sydenham, London. The Robert M. Price article was thought provoking but I for one won't forget that whatever views one holds on Derleth's revisions, without his involvement Lovecraft's own work would have been denied to future generations. But then perhaps that isn't the point.

Neil Grant, Mid-Glam, S. Wales. "What Is The Cthulhu Mythos?" was a thought-provoking article, though I don't agree with some aspects of Robert's view of the Mythos, particularly his belief that Lovecraft felt his creations were terrible ONLY because they didn't care about mankind. HPL was a zenophobe (something of which his racism was only one aspect) and couldn't envisage any worthwhile culture other than his own. Thus he would have felt them doubly terrible because of their lack of any culture of their own, and their utter contempt for his.

Brian Lumley, Devon. Contra Bob Price (who *is* a friend of mine, by the way,) Lovecraft may or not have said that bit bottom of page four, but he *did* often imply it. And a good many of his stories *are* based on such a premise. *Nowhere* in the paragraph is there any mention of good or evil; it is *not* implied. Bob's firing Dirk Mosig's bullets here and completely missing the target.

In "The Call of Cthulhu" Lovecraft *did* imply that there'd been a titanic evil force on Earth before man, and that "black magic" had gone wrong, stranding Cthulhu in R'lyeh. Now, by influencing the dreaming minds of men, he was trying to return. The comparison between Satan's fall from grace and his efforts ever since to take the world by storm *are* obvious! No, I don't think that's what Lovecraft meant, but let's not obscure the issue. The fact is "any reader of Lovecraft's stories knows that a good many of them *are* based on just such a theme." "Call of Cthulhu" is just one. *At the Mountains of Madness* another. "Shadow Out of Time". "Shadow Over Innsmouth". In fact most of the Cthulhu Mythos stories.

What Bob and some others have is this: a bee in their bonnets about August Derleth. They would try to utterly dissociate HPL from Derleth, because they believe he's "contaminated" Lovecraft's Mythos fiction. But the fact is that without Derleth we probably wouldn't even know about Lovecraft! I've even heard of of these so-called Lovecraft purists who swore he'd "piss on Derleth's grave"! That's the trouble with hero worship: it can get out of hand. People try to diefy their idols, until any intrusion becomes unbearable...

Andy Bennison, Preston, Lancs. I don't know if you've seen *Eraserhead* but it was shown on Channel 4, about a year ago - and let me tell you - it's weird. I watched it on my own (bad move) and found it... I think disturbing is the best way to describe it. The memory of it is somewhat blurred and I'm not sure that I'd like to watch it again. *Eraserhead* is certainly an experience (watch out for the mashed potato - at least I think that was what it was). I'd totally forgotten about that film. I wish Sandy hadn't reminded me of it now...

Mark Samuels. "The Acolyte" was a new feature to me as I've only read *Dagon* since #13, but I was surprised to see a man of Petersen's film tastes exclude *Nosferatu* from his list. Now that is a film to make the blood run cold. Shadowy Gothic German villages and centrestage Max Schreck - somewhat *too* convincing as the fiendish Count Orlac.

I'm in total agreement, Mark. For interested readers, Nosferatu *will feature at the London Film Festival around the time these issues go out. The NFT will be presenting the movie with live orchestral accompanyment. Definitely not to be missed by lovers of the vampire genre.*

Rik Shepherd, Stockport, Cheshire. For hallucinations and madness, what about the *Cabinet*

of Dr. Caligari? Full of jolly features such as sonambulist murders, an asylum run by a Doctor who may or may not be mad, sets with buildings of distinctly abnormal geometry, narrated by someone who may or may not be an inmate of the aformentioned institution.

S. J. Hatherley, Sidmouth. I think it is rather fortunate that the moral majority haven't heard of *Cthulhu*. Everyone knows that *D&D* and the rest are all *fantasy* games, but *Call of Cthulhu* is set only sixty years ago, and it all could be so real. The creatures really are blasphemous... let's keep it quiet, huh?

Jack Boulter. "Great Zimbabwe" - As usual, Prof Davreau gives us the necessary background information. This extended coverage was preferable to the previous shorter notes - this time around, Davreau really gives the place an atmosphere rather than an outline. Well done to Richard Watts, too.

Neil S. Price, New Malden, Surrey. My favourite feature was the revelation about Great Zimbabwe (I'm an archaeologist) - it suggested numerous scenario ideas. Is "Great Archaeological Sites: The Truths" a regular slot in *Dagon?*

I certainly hope that it will be! Actually for new cthulhoids Richard has already had one printed in issue 12, which dealt with Tiahuanaco.

Simon MacCullock, Edgware, Middx. I couldn't let "The Red Brain's Trust" item on music inspired by HPL's work go by without writing to mention two pieces by prime U.S. Heavy Metal band, Metallica, i.e. "The Call of Ktulhu" and "The Thing that Should Not Be", from their albums "Ride the Lightning" and "Master of Puppets" respectively. The first is a massive nine-minute instrumental featuring a relentlessly doom-fraught riff and suitably demented guitar break. The second is also about old Octopus-Head and its evocative lyrics include a quotation from the Necronomicon for good measure.

Interesting that. Actually there have been quite a few groups who have been influenced by Lovecraft a group called Bauhaus recorded a song called "Hollow Hills" which details the tale of underground cave-dwellers who are ghouls. Peter Hammill, a British musician recorded a 15-minute track called "Gog-Magog" which includes references to the Great Old Ones and the Elder Gods and this appears in his album "In Camera". The Fall have a song entitled "Spectre Versus Rector" on their second album "Dragnet" and concerns the exorcism of a young girl who is possessed by a demon who worships Yog-Sothoth. A New York band called Necktie Party released a single in the States entitled "Stranger Still" which included the mad Arab's "unexplainable couplet".

Sandy Petersen, Chaosium. In "The Red Brain's Trust", Peter Jeffery quotes from a Mr. Longmuir, a Scottish mycologist, who quite rightly points out that insect respiration prevents them from reaching huge sizes. However, his arguement is partially false. Insects do not use the human lungs-blood oxygenation scheme because the human scheme is actually grossly inefficient at their size. Instead of laboriously pumping air into the lungs, and thence shifting oxygen across a tissue barrier to the blood, and thence to the heart, from where it goes all through the body, insects convey oxygen directly to the cells themselves. The advantages should be obvious. The disadvantages are perhaps less so - the insects' spiracular system, while quite wonderful, can only be used in small creatures.

More facts: (1) While most insects, in fact, do not convey oxygen through their blood (no need to), a large number, such as midge larvae, do this quite effectively, and even sport a hemogloblin like substance. (2) Naturally, insects lack lungs, and have a spiracular system, instead. But insects aren't the only artropods in the world. Scorpions have lungs. Spiders have both lungs and spiracles (except for tarantulas, which have only lungs). Lobsters and crabs have gills.

(3) In any case, insects don't need giganticism to dominate the environment. Consider the social insects. When you examine a single army ant, you see a thumb-sized, blind, rather agile, insect. hardly fearsome. But an army ant *colony* is essentially a 20-50 kilogram predator with several million mouths and stings and a horrific resistance to injury (a machine-gun will kill a Bengal tiger - it's worse than useless against army ants). As it happens, army ants have evolved to feed mainly on other insects, though they kill anything too slow to keep out of their path. Army ants are no threat to humans - an advancing column travels maybe three feet a minute. Rather then fear, army ants

should evoke wonder, as the observer stands a step or two back and marvels at the writhing, clicking column - the result of an evolutionary process which has been just about as different from ours as is possible to imagine.

Social insects form what is known as a *superorganism*. This means that the colony as a whole behaves differently form the sum of its parts. You can train an ant colony to do things that an individual ant can never learn. And, of course, social insect colonies can modify their environment in ways normally believed the exclusive realm of humans. I think that Lovecraft's intelligent beetle-race, which supercedes mankind, is not composed of giant beetles at all, but rather ordinary-sized ones. I also believe that these beetles are probably highly socialized (in the manner of ants or bees), because the Great Race saw fit to parasitize them - I think it unlikely that they would wish to submit to a caste system. Unless perhaps the Great Race only took over the highest caste?

Neil S. Price. "The Plain of Sound" by Campbell was terrific - I've read several of his other works and this was one I'd never come across.

Jack Boulter. I found "The Plain of Sound" a refreshing tale in it's readability, and the plot was a very interesting one. Although it wasn't long enough to have a BIG impact - sometimes length gives a story that extra "weightiness" that "readability" can lose...?

Mike D. Mason, Loughborough, Leics. Having read "The Plain of Sound" I found it to be most unnerving. Ramsey's Mythos stories always give me a chill. "Plain of Sound" just seemed to ooze a kind of alien quality.

Andy Bennison, Preston, Lancs. Good to read one of Ramsey Campbell's harder to find short stories. It certainly was a little on the weird side, especially with the plain and the hut. It reminded me a little of something J. G. Ballard would write. I'm glad I've got it in my collection.

Neil Grant. I quite enjoyed reading "The Shadow Over Sidmouth" but I have a few qualms about running it - like how I am going to convince my players that anything as thoroughly repulsive as a Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath could be mistaken for a pot plant!

Mark Morrison, Brighton, Terra Australis. The scenario was by no means a masterpiece, but I was quite taken by the idea: a very bad moment to be in the fernery and suddenly recognize the oddly textured trunk with the gaping mouths... As for Bonsai, aieeeee!

Jack Boulter. I prefer this type of scenario to the more pre-programmed sort that appear in numerous other magazines. It really gives Keepers flexibility but still finds space for that crucial background padding. It worked in the same way that Andy Bennison's "Two Dimensional Horror" worked a couple of issues back.

Andy Bennison. "The Shadow Over Sidmouth" - What a good idea! I'll have to be careful next time I venture into the greenhouse. Also, I'll have to remember to count the cats and make sure all three are there each morning, just think R.A. & S.J. could have called their scenario "The Horror at the Garden Centre". Now there's a title to think about. (Or perhaps not?) Moving Swiftly on....

"Lessons from Lovecraft for Writers" turned out not as I expected it would. I thought Robert was going to catalogue the *errors* that HPL made, particularly in his attitude to his work. Yes, I know he only wrote his stories for himself & a small circle of friends, but his attitude towards the *commercial* side of writing was totally wrong. I'm particularly reminded of the letter he sent to publishers saying (and this is only me paraphrasing from memory)

- "I don't think you'll like these stories. I don't think you'd like to print them & I've only sent them to you because my friends keep hounding me to do it".

There was also his attitude to criticism:

- "If you have to change even one comma, semi-colon or fullstop, then it must be gracefully rejected".

Noone likes criticism (unless it's constructive) but that is taking things to extremes. I know HPL looked on his stories as works that couldn't be tampered with. I know he deeply cared about what he wrote (as most of us do) and put in many hours of revision. But his inflexibility was amazing. Similarly he became a defeatist when his stories were rejected, preferring to leave them in a drawer rather than resubmit them elsewhere. Not a good example for prospective writers I think you'll agree.

Peter F. Jeffery, Leicester. In "Lessons from Lovecraft for Writers" Mr. Price does well to re-state the principals of composition stated in HPL's "Suggestions" included in *The Notes & Commonplace Book* (Futile Press, 1938, reprinted by Necronomicon Press, 1978). If writers carefully prepared their text through a series of synopses and drafts the results would be a lot more readable than some recent fiction, which seems to have been written directly on the typewriter, without benefit of revision.

Neil Grant. In "Lessons" I think Robert missed one of the main reasons that HPL and his friends wrote Mythos fiction; as a joke. HPL had a strong (if somewhat bizarre) sense of humour, and frequently indulged it while writing Mythos fiction. Examples include puns on friends names, or HPL and Bloch's mutual destruction in "The Shambler from the Stars" and "The Haunter of the Dark"

I wouldn't say Lovecraft wrote purely "as a joke", he certainly didn't take the actual conception of the Mythos that seriously, but I think his works, not only in the Mythos but in the whole plethora of his writing, depicted Lovecraft's thoughts on life in general. Surely, the mere fact that Lovecraft refused to write commercially shows that he did care about his stories. As Peter Jeffery states in the letter at the top of the page the "Lessons" that Bob outlines are, indeed, Lovecraft's own thoughts on the subject. A re-reading of his fiction, shows that Lovecraft did hold these lessons in mind, himself.

Rik Shepherd. "Lessons from Lovecraft"... The problem I have relating to this is that I don't honestly regard Lovecraft as that brilliant a writer. He very rarely engages any emotion in me apart from curiosity. This article was interesting though. I'd always assumed that Lovecraft's humans were often 2-D by accident; I hadn't realised it was partially deliberate. I find a lot of Lovecraft's vocabulary, chosen "for precise effect" too distancing, too... glib. This sounds weird, I know, it's just you're reading the story & the thing appears... and it's "amorphous" and "blasphemous" and the architecture is "Cyclopean", just like the last story. I prefer the tales where he is concerned with the minutae of the 'normal' - which train he caught to Battlesboro, that sort of thing - so the abnormal stands out more. I really can't take "science fiction should not take place in the future" seriously. As for Apples on the Enterprise, what about the guy lugging a disc-recorder around in "In the Walls of Eryx"?

Alan Brooksby, Bolton. By far the best article in my opinion was "Plagued by Dreams". Anything which causes frustration & hysteria amongst players is always a good idea to a Keeper like me. Excellent ideas from Mark and very sneaky as well. But there is another application of dreams & nightmares. Usually when characters go indefinitely insane I roll for a random phobia and end up, with say, a fear of hospitals. Keeping this from the player I could start to introduce them to dreams in which something horrible happens to them while they are in hospital. e.g. they are operated on without anaesthetic. After a while the player will realise that their character could be in a dangerous situation in any hospital and so will avoid the places like the plague. This will amount to them running the character as if he really did have hospital phobia. And who's to say nothing nightmarish will happen if they go into hospital?

Ian Mundell, Wiltshire. I am surprised that in all the discussions on dreams recently "A Nightmare on Elm Street" hasn't received much attention. Although not Mythos, it is a fine example of merging dreams with reality. The use of shock tactic, for instance, the bath that turns into a bottomless pool. flexible walls and body swallowing beds.

Yes, Wes Craven's film, which Ian describes was one of my favourite releases of last year. Nightmares really are covered with extreme unease. A pity that the film's sequel "A Nightmare on Elm Street 2 - Freddie's Revenge" isn't quite so terrifying.

Mark Morrison. "Fear and it's uses" was well put, and should set some Keepers to think about their style; I shudder to think that Shotguns and Shoggoths is in all probability still out there, alive and festering... (players "whose 'This is boring - bring out the monsters' policy drives me underground." - Ford to Morrison, 26/1/86)I have thought of a few things that could have been covered with regards to actual delivery, so I may try to congeal an article at some stage; I am a great fan of physically assaulting my players. Nyak nyuk.

(Continued on page 15)

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APART FROM SMALL PRESS WEIRD FICTION WE ALSO STOCK NEW & SECONDHAND S.F., HORROR & FANTASY BOOKS; MARVEL, D.C. & INDEPENDENT COMICS; BRITISH COMICS, BRITISH, EUROPEAN & AMERICAN GRAPHIC ALBUMS; FILM & T.V. RELATED MATERIAL etc, etc. WE DO NOT DO A CATALOGUE, BUT WE WILL ACCEPT WANTS LISTS. WE ARE WILLING TO LIST SPECIFIC ITEMS ON REQUEST (ISSUES OF A PARTICULAR COMIC IN STOCK/BOOKS BY ONE OR TWO AUTHORS IN STOCK etc.) BUT THESE LISTS ARE MADE UP INDIVIDUALLY TO ORDER, SO BE REASONABLE.

WE CAN OFFER A POSTAL STANDING ORDER SERVICE ON ANY MAGAZINE OR COMIC THAT WE STOCK. PLEASE WRITE OR PHONE FOR DETAILS.